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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CHALLENGING THE STEREOTYPE OF GAMBLERS: A CASE STUDY OF CASINO REGULARS

BY

GRANT OCEAN

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

A theoretical model of gambling behavior examining the relationships between regular gamblers, the gambling institution, and the outside society is proposed and assessed in this study. This model is based on findings from a participant observation study conducted in a Canadian urban casino, a review of the related literature, and interviews with regular casino players. The intent of this investigation is to explore the structural and cultural factors operating both in society at large and in a particular gambling institution, and connect them with the personal characteristics of avid regular gamblers. A triangulation of the following research methods-- participant observation, survey, and in-depth interview--was employed to generate empirical data to verify the proposed model and the hypotheses derived from it.

The proposed theoretical model is generally supported by the results of this multi-methods study. The main conclusions are that the social rewards available in the casino, enhanced by the casino's unique institutional arrangement, tend to draw and hold regular casino gamblers; in addition, the casino gamblers' conflicts with the outside society which are magnified by the stigmatization of the gambler's role are other social forces that keep casino regulars in the gambling institution. There is a "double reinforcement" process at work

which secures the commitment of casino regulars to the gambling institution; social rewards positively reinforce while conflicts with the outside society negatively reinforce. The consequences of regular casino gambling are detrimental to those who sustain their involvement in the gambling institution at the expense of increased conflicts with the outside world, even though they may perceive that the rewards of gambling exceed the costs. A suggested strategy for curbing the negative consequences of gambling is to ease regular gamblers into social or recreational gambling roles and facilitate their interaction with mainstream society.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Gambling is an enduring and ubiquitous human activity; it has been popular for centuries throughout the world. "It is one of very few activities that has been found in nearly all societies in every era" (Smith, 1988, p. 1). Gambling was already thousands of years old before coined money made its debut in the ancient world. The ancient Siamese bet on which mussels would be the first to open their shells, and American Indians wagered on the different markings on concealed wooden objects. Perhaps it is safe to say that virtually anything containing an element of chance has, at some time or another, caused human beings to put money or property on the outcome (Puzo, 1977).

Conversely, some consider gambling to be one of the greatest vices in our society. It is believed that the social damages caused by out-of-control gambling outweigh any benefits that accrue to either the gambler or society (Ladouceur, Boisvert, Pepin, Loranger, & Sylvain, 1994; Kindt, 1994). Nevertheless, whether one likes it or not, gambling has survived attempts at eradication in the past and will no doubt be around in the future.

The Scope of Legal Gambling in Canada

In the past 25 years, gambling has become an important

cultural and social phenomenon in Canada (Campbell, 1991). In the past decade Canadian provinces have introduced new legal gambling formats which have increased gross annual wagering totals to over $10 billion (International Gaming & Wagering Business, 1995).

Prior to 1970, the only forms of gambling not formally outlawed in Canada were pari-mutuel wagering at horse-racing tracks; bingos and raffles for the purpose of charity fund-raising on an occasional basis; carnival-type games of chance and games of mixed skill and chance operated at annual fairs and exhibitions; and betting between individuals or within relatively small private groups such as wagering on the outcome of sports events like NHL games, friendly poker games, or office pools (Campbell, 1994).

In 1969, under the pressure of the province of Quebec and the City of Montreal, both of which faced tremendous financial burdens due to the 1967 Montreal World's Fair and the 1976 Summer Olympic Games, an amendment to Part V of the Criminal Code of Canada was passed. This amendment allowed provincial governments and provincial charitable and religious organizations to create revenues by conducting games of chance such as lotteries and bingos. This amendment induced a significant transformation in both the type and extent of legalized gambling in Canada. As of today, nearly 25 years after the amendment, every province and territory in Canada has some form of lottery (Campbell, 1994).

Another important change in the recent history of legalized gambling in Canada occurred in 1985. A revision to the Criminal Code of Canada made during that year disallowed the federal government from operating lotteries and left authority exclusively to provincial jurisdictions. The provinces were also given the authority to manage and operate other forms of gambling and mechanical gambling devices such as slot machines. As a consequence, the province of British Columbia initiated slot machine gambling on some government-owned and operated ferries, which were later privatized by the provincial government. In 1990, the province of Manitoba opened a provincially owned and operated casino in the city of Winnipeg, offering slot machines and many other gambling games. In 1991 the province of New Brunswick commenced the operation of video lottery terminals. Following suit, the government of Alberta introduced video lottery terminals in 1992, as did Saskatchewan in 1993. The government of Ontario adopted the Manitoba model and opened a provincially owned but privately operated, mega casino in Windsor in 1994. The Ontario government's rationale for going into the casino business was to stimulate tourism, revitalize local economies, create employment, and generate government revenues (Campbell, 1994).

Gambling is a major industry in Canada as shown by the amount of money wagered. Canadians spend almost 30 times as much on legal wagers as they spend on going to movies. That

is more than the combined 1990 revenues of $9.7 billion for five major Canadian corporations: Molson Companies Ltd., Canadian Tire Corp., Bombardier Inc., Xerox Canada Inc., and Du Pont Canada (Moon, 1992). In the North American Gaming Report (International Gaming & Wagering Business, 1995), the annual gross revenues generated through the major forms of legal gambling across ten Canadian provinces were listed at $2.8 billion for lotteries and $827.8 million for casinos.

The province of Alberta has been a leader among Canadian jurisdictions in initiating new forms of gambling. Alberta was the first province to explicitly move into government-regulated casino gambling for the purpose of raising funds for charitable groups. In 1980, the first permanent casino in Alberta was opened in Calgary. By 1994, there were three permanent casinos in Calgary as well as in Edmonton. The gross casino wagering totals in the province increased 5.1 times from $57.5 million in 1980 to $295 million in 1994 (International Gaming & Wagering Business, 1995). In 1980, there were five commercial style Bingo halls in Alberta, all in the Edmonton area. By 1994, there were more than 60 of these halls across Alberta. The gross Bingo wagering totals increased more than ninefold from $35.2 million in 1980 to $327.3 million in 1994 (International Gaming & Wagering Business, 1995). During 1994, the total gross amount wagered in Alberta from casinos, Bingos, raffles, and pull-tickets was $752.1 million, more than triple the $210,2 million wagered

in 1984. If one includes expenditures on lottery products and pari-mutuel betting on horse racing, the total amount spent on all forms of gambling in Alberta in 1994 totalled $1.59 billion (International Gaming & Wagering Business, 1995).

As a result of a reinterpretation of the term "lottery scheme" in the Canadian Criminal Code, legal gambling opportunities in Alberta continued to expand in 1990. The Western Canada Lottery Corporation introduced a sports wagering scheme allowing players to bet on the outcome of selected sports events. British Columbia, Quebec, and Ontario lottery authorities soon followed by inaugurating similar sports betting formats.

Table 1.1

Alberta Lottery Sales and Revenues in 1993

	Gross sales	Prize payout	Gross revenues
Lotto	$190,877,000	$87,800,000	$103,077,000
Instant	83,505,000	38,400,000	45,105,000
Pogo	8,045,000	3,700,000	4,345,000
Pick 3	3,295,000	1,500,000	1,795,000
Provincial	4,912,000	2,260,000	2,652,000
Plus	35,463,000	16,300,000	19,163,000
Sport Select	35,979,000	16,500,000	19,479,000
VLTs	138,630,000	89,322,000	49,308,000
Special event	2,798,000	1,300,000	1,498,000
Total	$503,504,000	$257,082,000	$246,422,000

Table 1.2

Alberta Charitable Gaming Proceeds in 1994

	Total wagered	Prizes paid	Net proceeds
Bingo	$327,301,480	$231,491,758	$47,008,432
Casino	295,005,615	242,972,190	22,848,557
Raffles	43,440,933	17,026,574	19,154,631
Pulltabs	86,376,095	64,201,777	17,012,508
Total	$697,871,664	$513,726,845	$101,848,281

Table 1.3

Winnings for a Typical Alberta Casino in 1991

	Average 2-Day Drop	Average Net Win
FEBRUARY	$242,640.00	$20,100.00
MARCH	$247,110.00	$31,400.00
APRIL	$240,630.00	$23,600.00
MAY	$246,668.00	$25,400.00
JUNE	$241,419.00	$22,700.00

Table 1.1 (International Gaming & Wagering Business, 1994) and Table 1.2 (International Gaming & Wagering Business, 1995) illustrate the most recent gambling statistics in Alberta , which demonstrate how much money the various forms of gambling have generated for charitable organizations and the Alberta government. It should be noted from the above tables that almost half of the gross sales of all gambling forms were kept by the operators as proceeds, except for Bingo, casino, and pulltabs. Even an average Alberta casino establishment can generate millions of dollars a year, as illustrated in Table 1.3 (Casino ABS, 1993). Moreover, thousands of citizens are either directly employed in the

gambling industry or indirectly involved through providing services to the industry. Consequently, the combination of government involvement, smaller entrepreneurs, large corporations, and service personnel constitutes a formidable gambling industry in Canada.

In addition, gambling is becoming a popular leisure activity for people from all walks of life, as observed by Waller:

> Indeed, gambling has existed and flourished in virtually every society, emerging as the province of either the very rich or the very poor. The wealthy amused themselves in well-appointed casinos and made horse racing the sport of kings. The poor wagered on simpler activities such as cards and dice. More recently, however, in the vain hope of striking it rich, they, too, have gone to the races, and after centuries of abstention, the vast middle class has awakened to the seductive delights of gambling--and responded willingly. (1974, P. 35)

A recent survey, conducted by the Saskatchewan government found 85% of the adult population in Saskatchewan had participated in gambling in their lifetime (Saskatchewan Government Survey, 1994), while a similar Alberta survey showed that 93% of the adult population claimed to have tried one or more of the types of wagering included in the survey (Wynne, Smith, & Volberg, 1994). Ladouceur, Dube, and Bujold (1994) conducted a survey of more than one thousand primary school students aged 8 to 12 in the region of Quebec city and found that 86% of their respondents had placed a bet and 61% had gambled on lotteries.

While there have been no definitive studies of Canadians'

gambling participation prior to the 1980s, American survey results demonstrate an increase in gambling participation over the years. In 1939, 54% of a sample of the American population reportedly gambled (Chafetz, 1960); in 1950, a Gallup poll estimated that 57% of the American population gambled (Fact Research Inc., 1976); in 1975, 61% of a sample of 2,000 American adults reported that they had gambled in the previous year (Kallick et al., 1979); and by April of 1989 a Gallup poll found that 72% of the adults surveyed in America had gambled in the past 12 months (Hugick, 1989).

As a result of the expansion of legalized gambling, not only are more people participating in gambling, but individuals are also spending more on various forms of gaming. For example, per capita wagering on all forms of gaming in Saskatchewan has grown from $45 in 1983 to $377 in 1991 (Saskatchewan Government, 1993). Moon (1992) reported that $430 was expended yearly on legal gambling for every man, woman, and child in the province of Alberta. This figure has recently increased astronomically to $1,400, purportedly because of the expansion of VLTs (Gold, 1995).

One notable downside to Canada's gambling binge is the growing problem gambling rate. In the province of Quebec, 3.8% of the adult population are thought to be problem gamblers (Ladouceur, 1993); New Brunswick has a 6.0% problem gambling rate (Baseline Market Research, 1992); and Alberta's current problem gambling rate is estimated at 5.4% of the adult

population, including 4.0% as problem gamblers and 1.4% as probable pathological gamblers (Wynne, Smith, & Volberg, 1994). Based on these rates, it is estimated that between 57,000 and 90,000 Alberta residents aged 18 and over can be classified as current problem gamblers, and between 16,500 and 35,000 Alberta residents aged 18 and over can be classified as current probable pathological gamblers.

Recent sociological studies of gambling behavior have deemphasized its deviant character and have begun to discuss it as a routine part of daily living. This growing tolerance, coupled with expanded gambling legalization, undoubtedly means there will be more problem gamblers in the future.

As Rosecrance notes, "for better or worse, gambling has become part and parcel of the American life-style. It is time that we begin to understand some of the societal ramifications of the legitimation of gambling" (1988, p. 2).

Significance of the Research

Despite the fact that gambling is one of the oldest human activities, our knowledge and understanding of gambling behavior and the socioeconomic impact of gambling is still inadequate. Because of this lack of understanding, it is difficult to reach a consensus on how best to deal with gambling. Sometimes this ambiguous situation can be costly to society. For example, pro-gambling and anti-gambling Natives on the Mohawk reserve in Akwesasne, Quebec, had an ongoing

battle sparked by their differing opinions on the consequences of gambling (Trickey, 1990). This lack of agreement on gambling issues is evident in the legislation in various North American jurisdictions. Some states or provinces have legalized extensive gambling activities whereas others prohibit the same activities. For instance, casino gambling in Canada is flourishing in Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Quebec, Nova Scotia, the Yukon, and in Windsor, Ontario, but has not taken hold in the rest of the country. Another problem is that certain forms of gambling are outlawed, but the laws are not always stringently enforced. The price society pays for ignoring illegal gambling is that individuals engage in criminal behavior and flout the law with impunity, which leads to a disrespect for the law in general (Smith, 1991). Accordingly, this study is aimed at providing basic information about regular casino gamblers, their motivations, habits and, ultimately, the consequences of their gambling behaviors. This information should assist legislators and those in the gambling industry in making rational policies on gambling issues.

Possible Contributions of the Study

Notwithstanding the fact that gambling activities have become legitimized in our society and more people are involved with gambling, "hard-core" gamblers are still not completely tolerated. This is because gambling behavior has traditionally been viewed as deviant behavior. For example,

Thio (1988) mentioned gambling as a form of deviant behavior and discussed it as a socially destructive activity. Stebbins (1996) labelled gambling "tolerable deviance." A religious pamphlet (Staff, 1991) claimed that gambling generates strife, fits of anger, and greed, and that because greed is condemned by God, gambling should be outlawed. This imputation still has some acceptance among ordinary citizens and even among gamblers themselves. Many gamblers frankly admit their gambling behavior is a "bad habit." This study strives to show what regular casino gamblers are really like so as to engender a better understanding of the casino gamblers among ordinary people.

The research findings should provide useful information for government policy makers. Traditionally, gambling has been viewed by legislators as "a 'painless' way for governments to raise revenue without increasing taxes" (Rosecrance, 1988, p. 2). This viewpoint has some currency among the Canadian public, mainly the non-gamblers who benefit from the revenues raised through gambling. In a study dealing with Alberta amateur sports groups' dependence on gambling revenue, Smith and his colleagues (1989) found there was a dehumanizing effect on the charitable groups who benefited from legalized gambling; because the goal of charitable groups is to maximize profits, the gamblers were not viewed as human beings with feelings and emotions, rather they were treated as human cash machines. As a result, the gamblers were sometimes held in

contempt; names like "undesirables," "degenerates," and "addicts" were used by respondents to describe casino and Bingo patrons. With this prevailing attitude and with provincial governments' rising debt loads, it is likely that new gambling policies will be driven by the need to raise even more money. Unfortunately, the needs and well-being of the gambling participants are rarely the concern of policy makers. Hopefully, this research will help legislators realize that avid gamblers are not just money donating automatons, but people who need to be educated about and protected from the hazards of gambling.

Although the gambling experience can be pleasurable for those involved, it has the potential to cause personal troubles for gamblers and social problems for society. One of the major concerns expressed by researchers of gambling behavior is that some players continue to gamble to the point of losing their jobs, families and, on occasion, their lives (Browne, 1989; Lesieur, 1992). Rosecrance (1988) reminds us that in the future the major social concern stemming from increased participation will be problem gambling.

The Social and Economic Impacts of Problem Gambling

A small percentage of players cannot control their urge to gamble and therefore become problem gamblers. Furthermore, these problem gamblers do not suffer alone because their gambling addiction influences the lives of others, especially family members, friends and employers. Apart from shattering

relationships, problem gambling is also associated with criminal activities such as theft, embezzlement, loan sharking, tax evasion, and so forth. Furthermore, problem gamblers tend to be more unproductive in their jobs and a burden on the social welfare system (Smith, 1992); they also tend to have alcohol and other substance abuse problems, engage in illegal activities to finance gambling, and use medical services more often than the general population (Ladouceur et al., 1994). A study conducted by the Saskatchewan government revealed that two-thirds of non-incarcerated and 97% of incarcerated problem gamblers admitted to engaging in illegal activities to support their gambling addiction (Saskatchewan Justice, 1993). Many of the social costs of problem gambling such as suicide attempts, separations, divorces, loss of trust in families, and medical or psychiatric care are subtle and difficult to calculate (Ladouceur et al., 1994).

The Purpose of the Study

This study deals with a question that has long perplexed gambling behavior researchers: Why do people persist in a potentially destructive activity? This study also seeks to further our understanding of the personal troubles and social damages caused by excessive gambling. Most importantly, this study may play an emancipatory role for casino gamblers. Gamblers in Canadian society are, by and large, a powerless

group, the "underdog," in comparison to the government, gambling industry, and charity organizations that profit from legalized gambling. Gamblers are marginalized by their inability to influence gambling policies and rules which have a decisive impact on their chances of winning the games they play and on their life chances. The findings of this study may empower gamblers to change their situations, both within the gambling institution and in society, by alerting them to the sociocultural factors that constrain them.

The casino gambling subculture is similar to other subcultures; as a result, there may be applications to the study of other stigmatized subcultures such as barroom subcultures, gay and lesbian clubs, youth gangs, and non-traditional social groups (Dumont, 1967; Goffman, 1961; Hooker, 1967; Li, 1979; Simon, 1986; Weinfeld, 1983; Weitz, 1990).

The purpose of this study is to examine the world of the regular casino gamblers, to find ways of organizing legal gambling that will maximize public benefits and minimize personal and social harm. An underlying assumption of this study is that gambling, as an integral part of contemporary life, should be organized such that it enriches people's lives whenever possible.

Definition of Terms

Gambling

Gambling is defined by Devereux (1949) as "... an activity in which the parties involved... voluntarily engage to make the transfer of money or something else of value among themselves contingent upon the outcome of some future and uncertain event." The terms "gambling," "betting," and "wagering" can be used synonymously.

Gaming Activities

Gaming activities include the full range of government regulated gambling in Canada: lotteries (e.g., traditional Lotto draws, scratch tickets), sports lotteries, video lottery terminals (VLTs), casinos, Bingos, raffles, pull-tickets, sports betting and horse racing. There are also popular forms of gambling that are illegal in Canada, such as dice games, betting with a bookmaker, that are not dealt with in this study.

Pathological, Compulsive, and Problem Gambling

Pathological gambling was formally recognized by the American Psychiatric Association as a mental disorder in 1980, and the APA defines this condition as "persistent and recurrent maladaptive gambling behavior that disrupts personal, family, or vocational pursuits" (p. 615). The essential features of the disorder are a continuous or periodic loss of control over gambling; a progression in frequency and amounts wagered, as well as a preoccupation with

gambling and with obtaining monies with which to gamble; and a continuation of the behavior despite negative consequences for both the individual and society.

"Compulsive gambling," "pathological gambling," and "problem gambling" are used in the gambling literature to describe gambling behavior which is manifested by symptoms such as the loss of control over gambling, deterioration of personal functioning, and a failure to fulfill familial and social responsibilities. Recently, these three terms have been identified as labelling slightly different gambling behaviors. The descriptor "compulsive gambling" is based on the assumption that problem gambling is similar to other compulsive behaviors. However, some gambling scholars note that there are differences between out-of-control gambling behavior and other compulsions (Walker, 1992). Unlike other compulsive behaviors which are aversive to the individuals involved, "compulsive" gambling behavior is pleasurable to most gambling participants, at least in the initial stages of their gambling career. The term "pathological gambling," used by the American Psychiatric Association, emphasizes the mental disorder causes of the behavior. "Problem gambling" is used most frequently in the recent literature and refers to any gambling behavior that negatively affects family relations, personal lives, or occupational pursuits. Problem gambling is more inclusive than the other two terms. The term entails compulsive or pathological gambling, but is not limited to

either of them. The United States National Council on Compulsive Gambling's recent renaming to the United States National Council on Problem Gambling reflects this change in thinking (Smith, 1992).

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories and research explaining why people gamble and why some individuals persist at gambling while losing heavily are numerous and have increased dramatically in the last decade. The theoretical and methodological approaches used to analyze gambling behavior can be divided into three broad classifications: psychological studies, sociological studies, and participant observation studies.

Psychological Explanations for Gambling Behavior

The vast majority of gambling studies have been driven by a psychological perspective. These scholars have attempted to explain gambling behavior by focusing on idiosyncratic or psycho-pathological motivations of gamblers. The psychological studies on gambling are reviewed within the sub-categories of psychoanalytic explanations, personality traits explanations, conditioned behavior explanations, needs explanations, reasoned action explanation, and sociocognitive explanations.

Psychoanalytic Theories

Psychoanalytic theories for gambling are based on two beliefs: one is that all behavior is motivated by the gratification of instinctual drives, and another is that the dynamics of mental illness can be traced back to the first relationships in the early years of development.

Maze (1987) posited that people gamble to punish their mother for her failure to be sufficiently loving. The perception of an unloving mother is ostensibly caused by problems with weaning. The inevitable gambling losses are supposedly akin to the mother failing to love sufficiently. Losing makes gamblers feel righteously angry that their desires have not been met. Thus, the instinctual drive gratified by gambling is aggression directed at the mother-surrogate: the gambling games and the representatives of the gambling industry. However, some of the aggression directed outwards at gambling (the mother-surrogate) is also directed toward oneself (self-punishment).

Bergler (1970) assumed that the psychological basis of heavy gambling arises from Oedipal conflict, which is the unconscious desire of a child to sexually possess the parent of the opposite sex while excluding the parent of the same sex. The Oedipal conflict makes individuals feel guilty. People engage in gambling because they are subconsciously punishing themselves by losing something valuable.

Other scholars suggested that the reason for gambling to excess can be found in the family dynamics that existed in the gamblers' childhood (Jacobs, 1986; Lorenz, 1987; Gray 1990). A person growing up in an abusive family situation usually has lower self esteem which becomes a source of pain and unhappiness that continues into adulthood. Gambling is an attractive outlet to this kind of person because it is

exciting and absorbing. The gambler becomes immersed in the activity to escape these feelings of inadequacy.

Trompf (1987) theorised that gambling is a means by which individuals can predict outcomes and test reality. The avid gambler becomes locked into this testing mode. Every gamble is the re-creation of uncertainty that was present in childhood. Gambling is a game, and the gambler is not an "adult" participating in a responsible activity but is still a child testing outcomes within that game.

Personality Traits Theories

Sensation Seeking. Zuckerman (1979) suggested that gamblers are looking for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences. Several researchers have tested the hypothesis that gamblers score higher than non-gamblers on measures of sensation seeking, but the results of these studies are inconclusive. The findings of Kuley and Jacobs (1988) supported the hypothesized relationship between sensation seeking and gambling, while other studies did not affirm the expected relationship (Anderson and Brown, 1984; Ladouceur and Mayrand, 1986). Conversely, there was evidence of a reverse relationship between sensation seeking and gambling (Blaszczynski et al., 1986; Dickerson et al., 1987). Anderson and Brown (1984) argued it is not the frequency of gambling that is related to sensation seeking but the betting behavior itself; that is, gamblers measuring high on a sensation seeking scale would theoretically bet more than non-

sensation seekers. The finding, that regular Blackjack players who were high on sensation seeking made bigger bets, supported this hypothesis (Anderson & Brown, 1984). Roby and Lumley (1995) found that frequent gamblers exhibited greater arousal than did infrequent gamblers. This result may indicate that frequent gamblers are high on sensation seeking.

Extroversion. Unlike introverts who are supposedly more moral and more inhibited, and prefer being alone and working in quiet surroundings, extroverts are happier, more social, crave excitement, and enjoy noisy and active environments (Walker, 1992). Based on these differences, it is hypothesized that extroverts will be more likely to participate in gambling than will introverts. The studies exploring the relationship between extroversion and gambling have produced contradictory results. Wong (1980) found members of Gamblers Anonymous to be high on an extroversion scale, whereas McConaghy and his colleagues (1983) found pathological gamblers were not significantly different on extroversion measures than normal gamblers. In contrast, Blaszczynski et al. (1986) showed pathological gamblers to be low on extroversion and Ladouceur and Mayrand (1986) found no difference between Roulette players and non-gamblers on measurements of extroversion.

Locus of Control. Several studies have tested the hypothesis that an internal locus of control predisposes an individual to avoid gambling, whereas an external locus of control makes an individual more susceptible to being involved

in gambling. In support of this hypothesis Devinney (1979) noted that heavy gamblers had higher scores on external locus of control scales. Wong (1980) also found that Gamblers Anonymous members had higher external locus of control scores. Hong and Chiu (1988) found that the Match Six players were more likely to have an external locus of control. On the other hand, studies by Glass (1982), Jablonski (1985), Kusyszyn and Rutter (1985), and Ladouceur and Mayrand (1986) discovered no differences on locus of control either between gamblers and non-gamblers, or between various groups of different gambling frequency.

Other Personality Traits. Moravec and Munley (1983) reported that pathological gamblers appeared to be more intelligent than the general population. Kusyszyn and Rutter (1985) reported that long term gamblers were more likely to have high self-esteem, more likely to favour taking risks, less likely to be anxious, and less likely to be depressed than short term gamblers.

Conditioned Behavior Theories

Gambling provides reinforcement on a constant probability basis; consequently, gambling behavior preceding a positive outcome will be conditioned over a period of time. Consistent with this theory, Dickerson (1974) found that 72% of frequent betting shop gamblers had early luck in their gambling careers in comparison with 15% of the occasional betting shop gamblers who reported early luck when they started gambling.

Brown (1986) proposed arousal or excitement as the main reinforcers for gambling behavior. The reason why gambling behavior persists after inevitable losses is because gambling behavior is maintained by the most powerful reinforcement schedule--random reinforcement.

Needs Theories

The needs explanation perspective is based on the premise that gambling fulfils certain psychological or physiological needs. McCormick (1987) and Jacobs (1986) hypothesized that certain individuals become gamblers because they are under-aroused; gambling supposedly increases their arousal and makes them feel better. Studies by Dickerson and his colleagues (1987, 1990) did not support this hypothesis. Dickerson and Adcock (1987) compared high frequency slot machine players, who played three times per week or more, with low frequency slot machine players on their arousal levels before and during gambling. The results indicated no differences in heart rate between the high frequency and low frequency groups when resting or when playing a slot machine. Likewise, Dickerson et al. (1990) found no significant differences on self-report measures of mood level between high frequency players (once a week or more) and medium and low frequency players.

Gambling may also be used to cope with long-term depressive conditions. Whether the gambling is learned helplessness or a pessimistic cognitive style, gambling provides an escape from depression or stress in the way that

other absorbing activities can. An association between depression and heavy gambling has been found by several researchers (McCormick, Russo, Ramirez and Taber, 1984; Graham and Lowenfeld, 1986; Lorenz and Yaffee, 1986), but these studies did not ascertain the temporal order of the depression and the gambling. For instance, the depression might be a result of large monetary losses sustained by the gambler rather than a condition that preceded the gambling. Dickerson and Adcock's (1987) study provided limited support for this observation in that they found that a prior disturbed mood, arising from stresses at work or in the home, was associated with regular players' persistence at gambling.

Reasoned Action Theory

Cummings and Corney (1987) used Fishbein's theory of reasoned action to explain gambling activities in terms of gambling attitudes and subjective norms. Based on this theory, they viewed demographic, socioeconomic, personality, information processing, and motivation variables as having only an indirect effect on gambling behavior. Their effects are seen as influencing behavioral intentions through their impact on the individual's attitude toward the behavior, and the subjective norms with respect to the behavior (the person's perception of how significant others would think of the gambling behavior, and his or her motivation to comply). Therefore, one's attitude toward gambling and the subjective norms of gambling behavior play a vital role in gambling

activity.

Sociocognitive Theories

Sociocognitive explanations of gambling behavior are based on the premise that gambling behavior is maintained by irrational thinking. One common irrational thinking pattern among gamblers is called the "gambler's fallacy;" that is, gamblers bank on a law of averages that does not exist rather than on probability theory. Cohen (1972) provided empirical evidence for gamblers' irrational thinking when he found Roulette players being more likely to bet on the same colour if it had lost than if it had won. The mistaken rationale for this betting behavior was that players believed the colour which had not turned up had a higher probability of turning up the next time. In reality, red or black has an equal chance on any given spin, no matter how many times one colour has shown up before. Examples of irrational thinking in gambling situations include belief in luck, illusion of control, biased evaluation of outcomes, and entrapment.

Belief in Luck. A belief in luck is irrational because, first, luckiness is attributed historically but has no relevance as a basis for anticipation; secondly, the chance that one has of winning is outside one's range of experience (Maze, 1983). The irrational belief in luck was discussed by Li and Smith (1976), and Wagenaar (1988). Downes and his associates (1976) reported that many lottery players bought their tickets from one kiosk or newsagent rather than others

because that agent was believed to be "lucky," as Rescher (1995) noted "to try one's luck from time to time is perfectly sensible--though to trust to luck as a systematic policy is clearly foolhardy" (p. 31).

Illusion of Control. Illusion of control refers to gamblers thinking they have more control over an outcome than is actually the case. This form of irrational thinking has been observed in experimental studies involving Roulette (Ladouceur & Mayrand, 1986). Even though there is no optimal playing strategy in roulette, 44% of the players who thought that strategies could influence the outcome of a spin believed that their playing system really influenced the outcome, whereas only 14% of the players who believed in chance as the main outcome determinant of roulette reported the influence of strategy over outcome. Langer (1975) found that raffle players would sell their tickets to someone else for a higher price than they originally paid because they believed that the tickets they bought had a better chance to win. This finding demonstrates that people have more confidence in the ticket they select, indicating that they think they have some degree of control over the outcome. A phenomenon similar to the illusion of control is known as "near misses." Strickland and Grote (1967) noted that players would persist in playing a slot machine if there were more winning symbols on the first stopped reel and less winning symbols on the last stopped reel. The reason for the behavior is that people believe in

the sequence of happenings; in this case, they thought other reels would soon follow the first reel to stop with winning symbols. Lottery ticket buyers frequently report the extent by which they narrowly "missed" a big prize (Wagenaar, 1988), for example, a ticket matching all the winning numbers but one. The "near misses" are interpreted positively by gamblers as a sign that they are getting closer to the final success and thus induce greater persistence in play and adherence to a system, even though a ticket matching some of the winning numbers is not materially different from a ticket with none of the winning numbers. Subjects in Breen and Frank's (1993) study took greater risks as their exposure to games of chance prolonged, regardless of whether they were on winning or losing streaks. This finding may be indicative of an illusion of control. A familiarity with a gambling situation may make gamblers feel more confident in their perceived "skills."

Biased Evaluation of Outcomes. The biased evaluation of outcomes is an explanatory mechanism arising from attribution theory. Successful outcomes are attributed to factors internal to the person, such as skill and effort, whereas failures are attributed to factors beyond one's personal control, such as bad luck. Gilovich and Douglas (1986) found that Bingo players who won on the first game increased their bets on the second game, and players who lost in what they perceived was a fluke result also increased their bets. Only the players who lost convincingly reduced their bets. Therefore, a biased

evaluation of a fluke outcome allows both winners and losers to maintain their belief in the likelihood that they will win.

Entrapment. Entrapment in this context is defined by Brockner and Rubin (1985) as "a decision making process whereby individuals escalate their commitment to a previously chosen, though failing, course of action in order to justify or 'make good on' prior investments" (p. 5). The vast majority of Lotto players believe that certain numbers have a greater chance of being drawn than other numbers (Allcock & Dickerson, 1986). Many players believe in the special properties of telephone numbers, street addresses, and birth dates. Weekly players who buy tickets with their lucky numbers soon become entrapped because they are afraid to miss a single draw in case their lucky numbers hit the jackpot.

> All gambling is entrapping, provided that you believe that, with persistence, you will win. Regular horse players are heavily entrapped by their methods and systems. Blackjack players are entrapped by basic strategy and the lure of counting. Slot machine players know how to avoid the "hungry" machines. Lotto players have magical insight into winning combinations. All that is necessary is persistence. But persistence produces losses which increase the importance of remaining in the game until those losses are recouped. The greater the losses the greater the entrapment. (Walker, 1992, pp.146-147)

Two social scientists, Jay Livingston (1974) and Henry Lesieur (1984), found a similar process at work among Gamblers Anonymous members. Livingston described a process of entrapment wherein gamblers are inexorably drawn into escalating participation and disastrous betting practices;

Lesieur identified the same phenomenon as "chasing" after lost money in an attempt to remain in action.

Sociological Factors Pertaining to Gambling Behavior

Sociological studies on gambling place an emphasis on the social context of gambling behavior, i.e., determining the effect of social structural, cultural and demographic factors on the onset and outcome of gambling behavior.

Abt, McGurrin and Smith (1985) developed a comprehensive model aimed at assessing the effects of cultural and individual factors on an individual's initial decision to gamble, and whether or not they would continue in subsequent gambling behavior. The model goes beyond a simple behaviouristic psychological explanation of gambling and focuses on a player's interpretations and evaluations of the meaning of gaming activities within a social and cultural context. Abt et al. suggested that socio-cultural factors (e.g., social-economic status, race, ethnicity, age, income, opportunity to gamble, gaming regulations and statutes) may affect the social transformation rules (social norms defining the gambling event), and both may affect the gambling event. Both the psychological transformation rules (e.g., self image, personality traits, locus of control, gaming experience, values and attitudes) and the gambling action are each affected by socio-cultural factors, social transformation rules, and the gambling event. For example, the social

transformation rule of accepting a loss gracefully has some effect on a gambler's self-image and the way he or she gambles. Conforming with the norm of being a graceful loser can win respect from fellow gamblers because it is perceived as a desirable character trait.

Impact on Society

One of the earliest and most important sociological studies on gambling was conducted by Edward Devereux in 1949. Devereux, a student of Talcott Parsons, rejected individualistic views of gambling and attempted to explain how "deviant behavior patterns and sub rosa organizations fit into the general framework of the social structure" (p. 4). He concluded that gambling serves as a safety valve for the contradictions, inconsistencies, and strains inherent in the social value system. Devereux theorized that the prevailing social structure is in conflict with its value system; gambling serves to relieve some of these tensions without altering the basic structure and thus enhances societal equilibrium. Participation in gambling provides a safe outlet for divergence; unable to discredit the basic institutions directly, malcontents can instead work out their frustrations by gambling.

Bloch (1951) contended that gambling is a retreatist adaptation to the humdrum routine and boredom of modern industrial life. "Taking a chance destroys routine and hence is pleasurable, particularly in a culture where the unchanging

and predictable routines of employment are sharply separated from leisure" (p. 216). In this and later studies, Bloch emphasized that gambling is both deviant and dysfunctional behavior since it disrupts family life, facilitates criminal activity, and interferes with worker productivity.

Peterson (1951), after examining the merits and drawbacks of legalized gambling, argued that the legalization of gambling is detrimental to society. He considered gambling a frivolous activity whose participants are motivated by a desire to "get rich quick" without putting forth the necessary effort.

Light (1977) asserted that numbers gambling among American "Blacks" is not seen as a deviant activity, but instead an alternative form of savings or investment. Rather than wasting their money on frivolities, these numbers players envision themselves putting something away for a rainy day.

Ladouceur et al. (1994) claimed that although gambling is a unharmful leisure activity for most people, the burden placed by pathological gamblers on society is often underestimated. Their study of pathological gamblers attending Gamblers Anonymous meetings in the Quebec City region revealed that most of these gamblers used their family savings and borrowed money to gamble, and one third of them had filed for bankruptcy as a result of their gambling debts. Ladouceur et al. also found that pathological gambling had an adverse impact on workplace productivity, and was linked with alcohol

and other substance abuse, illegal activities, and medical costs. About half of their respondents missed work regularly and stole money from their employers in order to gamble, and had lost their jobs (36%) because of gambling problems. Over half of the respondents consumed alcohol and drugs regularly. Two-thirds of them reported having engaged in illegal acts to raise money for gambling and over two-thirds said they experienced depressive moods, insomnia, headaches or stomach aches due to gambling. Griffiths (1994) noted a high incidence of cross addictions, that is, out-of-control gambling was often combined with excessive alcohol and/or drug use among his male respondents.

After reviewing the economic impacts of legalized gambling activities, Kindt (1994) concluded that legalized gambling does not help the economy, rather it drains the financial viability from communities. He argued that legalized gambling activities are different from traditional businesses in that gambling produces economic, business, social, and governmental costs by developing problem gamblers.

Culture

Martinez (1983) viewed the gambling scene as a subculture whose formal and informal norms reduce the tension level in the game and contribute to a smooth flow of action. Because of the existence of these informal norms, it is possible for the self-esteem or social status of the participants to be improved or downgraded accordingly.

Thompson (1991) examined the influence of a cultural value called "machismo" in Latin American casinos. "Machismo" is defined as a strong sense of masculine pride. To have "machismo" a man must achieve the ideal of maleness by displaying values of fearlessness, courage, and valour, and he must welcome challenges of danger and even death with an attitude of insouciance. As a result, the male players observed in Latin American casinos favoured those games consisting almost entirely of luck. Basic Blackjack strategy play was rarely seen, and card counters were virtually non-existent. Players sometimes hit 18s and 19s; part of the machismo ethos is that a successful hit on 19 shows daring and displays manliness.

Grichting (1986) claimed that permissive attitudes toward gambling encourage gambling in the Australian culture. In Australia, where non-gamblers are negatively stereotyped as "wowsers," levels of gambling involvement are reputed to be the highest in the world (Munting, 1993). Walker (1992) pointed out that many Western countries, including North America, have developed cultures that encourage gambling. For example, there is extensive gambling advertising regarding where and how to gamble, and what the pay-outs are. As a consequence, appropriate gambling behaviors are conveyed, and the salience of the payoff is enhanced.

Opportunity

Kallick, Suits, Dielman and Hybels (1979) in an American

national study on the extent of gambling activity found that 72% of suburbanites, and 66% of city dwellers, but only 43% of people living in small cities or rural areas, bet in 1974. One explanation offered for this discrepancy is that metropolitan areas provide more gambling opportunities.

Gambling involvement also depends partly on the amount of leisure time available. Rosecrance (1986) and Brenner and Brenner (1987) noted that young, single and unemployed males were more likely to have higher levels of gambling involvement than their older, married and employed counterparts. Similarly, the retired showed an increase in gambling behavior compared to those still working. Jacobs (1986) suggested that as developed countries move further into the technological age, leisure time will increase and gambling involvement will soar if other conditions stay the same.

Gambling involvement is constrained by the number of opportunities an individual has to gamble. Haig (1985) pointed out that the introduction and legalization of new forms of gambling increases the amount of gambling in a community. In the same vein, Caldwell and his associates (1988) found that the Aboriginal Australians did not gamble prior to colonization by the white man, simply because gambling was unavailable to them. In a thorough summary of the gambling literature, Volberg (1994) noticed a positive relationship between access to gambling and problem gambling.

Lifestyle

Walters (1994a, 1994b) conceptualized gambling behavior as a lifestyle. A gambling lifestyle is characterized by four behavioral styles, pseudoresponsibility, self-ascension, hypercompetitiveness, and social rule breaking, bending, twisting. Individuals with a gambling lifestyle are seemingly responsible members of a family and society. They regard gambling as the solution to social, financial, or personal problems. They receive positive reinforcement and personal gratification in beating the odds or in outwitting the house. Finally, these individuals are willing to break, bend, or twist societies' rules in order to gamble. Individuals commit to a gambling lifestyle as they become more deeply involved in gambling activity. Walters claimed that his gambling lifestyle model is an alternative to the traditional disease or personality models used to help understand problem gambling. He suggested that gamblers at the final stage of gambling involvement "burnout" and develop a counter-lifestyle. A gambling lifestyle is the result of an interaction of life conditions, personal choices, and cognitive styles. With regard to treating problem gamblers on the basis of his gambling lifestyle theory, Walters proposed a reinforcing non-gambling lifestyle. Specifically, he recommended substitute actions and hobbies that are sufficiently rewarding. He also suggested that problem gamblers restrict their contact with past gambling-related

associates, and be encouraged to form friendships with non-gamblers. Furthermore, developing basic life, social, academic, and occupational skills will expand problem gamblers' options in real-life situations and lessen the chance of their drifting back into gambling lifestyles.

Demographic Considerations

Gender. Kallick et al. (1979) reported that more males said they bet in 1974 (68%) than did females (55%). They also found that women were less likely than men to gamble in games such as Blackjack and lotteries, but were more likely than men to engage in Bingo and raffles. The different preferences are attributed to gender-role socialization. A study by Bruce and Johnson (1994) provided some evidence for greater risk propensity and higher confidence in their choices amongst male offcourse horse racing bettors as compared to females who engaged in the same activity.

Gove, Ortega and Style (1989) theorised that women would have a lower propensity to gamble than men if competitiveness drives gambling because men are more likely than women in our society to attribute to themselves competitive characteristics. Dixey (1987) found that working-class women in England prefered playing Bingo to fulfill the need to socialize with other women because most other forms of gambling were dominated by males.

A study on the impact of gender on gambling attitudes and behavior found partial support for the gender role

socialization explanation (Lindgren, Youngs, Jr., McDonald, Klenow, & Schriner, 1987). On the one hand, the impact of gender on concerns about the morality of gambling is consistent with the double standard hypothesis that women have higher moral standards than men. The impact of gender, both on attitudes toward the legalization of gambling, and on attitudes toward the promotion of gambling, is consistent with the cultural perception of women's role as guardians of the hearth (family). On the other hand, the absence of a substantive relation between female respondents and a lack of knowledge of gambling's legality is inconsistent with the expectation of dual orientations, which suggests that women are more likely to have knowledge about the private world of the home and less likely to have knowledge about the public world of work than men. According to their research, Lindgren et al. pointed out that care should be taken not to over-emphasize the role of gender in gambling, and that gender is related to gambling behavior and to some gambling attitudes, but these relations are modest, and they appear likely to decrease.

A study conducted in Alberta by Wynne, Smith and Volberg (1994) revealed that men and women were almost equally represented in terms of their involvement in Lotto-type games, instant or scratch tickets, and video lottery and slot machines. However, they found that on a weekly basis men were much more likely than women to participate in games of skill

(92% male, 8% female), horse racing (83% male, 17% female), or speculative investments (73% male, 27% female), while women were more likely than men to engage in Bingo (16% male, 84% female).

Age. Mok and Hraba (1991) found a negative relationship between chronological age and gambling behavior, which was defined by the number of games they played, how often they played, and how much they typically wagered. Game preference also varied with age; in general, there was a withdrawal from multiple types of gambling and a concentration on one or two gambling activities as age increased. Gambling patterns shifted from betting on lotteries, playing games at home and spectator sports into casinos, horse betting and financial speculation with middle age, and then into Bingo with old age.

Kallick et al. (1979) noted a general decline in gambling participation with chronological age. They attributed these age differences in gambling behavior to aging and cohort effects, that is, each later age group (cohort) had been socialized into a less conservative environment about gambling.

Wynne et al. (1994) found that the majority (77%) of the weekly gambling participants in their study were over 30 years old. But on the weekly basis, young people (under 34 years of age) were overrepresented in games of skill (70%), video lottery and slot machines (55%); they were underrepresented in horse racing (16%).

Social Class. Socio-economic classes are attracted to different forms of gambling due to the social and historic origins of gambling in a given culture. O'Hara (1990) found that horse race betting was and remains predominantly an upper-middle class form of gambling in Great Britain because horse racing and racecourse gambling are organized by The Jockey Club, which is an aristocratic institution. In comparison, horse racing in Austrialia is organized by the working class and farming communities in small towns and, therefore, attracts mainly working class gamblers. Similarly, Eadington (1990) noted that casino gambling in Great Britain was legalized on a very restrictive basis (Club membership) and has remained a middle and upper class activity; on the other hand, casino gambling was legalized as a holiday and recreational activity for the masses in the United States and attracts players from all walks of life.

Reference Group

Attitudes toward gambling of salient reference groups can play a significant part in determining whether or not an individual will gamble. Cornish (1978) identified the family as an important training ground for learning gambling behavior. Children may learn about the excitement of gambling by watching the reactions of their parents. When parents involve their children in their gambling activities, such as asking their children to fill out tickets, carry the money, and look after the tickets, they may inadvertently be teaching

their children the means and strategies of gambling.

Hardy (1958) found that male work groups provided social pressure to gamble. Those who disapproved of gambling were ostracized from the group. Thompson's (1991) study on the "machismo" behavior of male players in Latin American casinos provided additional evidence for this phenomenon. A man should welcome risk-taking activities such as gambling; otherwise, he is seen as lacking courage and manliness and being unfit for adventure-oriented male groups. Thus work groups may be another important reference group which can encourage or discourage gambling.

Several researchers (Zola, 1963; Henslin, 1967; Zurcher, 1970; Rosecrance, 1986) suggested that gender differences in gambling involvement are based on the attitudinal differences of gender based reference groups rather than on the differential access to gambling. Gambling is perceived as a means of acquiring money, which is consistent with the male sex role. Male reference groups are much more likely than female reference groups to encourage gambling among their members.

Social Benefits

Zola (1963) was one of the first researchers to investigate the practices of regular gambling participants in an actual gaming situation. Although impressed with the rational betting practices of horse race gamblers, Zola considered gambling to be a lower-class behavior pattern. He

described the social setting of a tavern segregated from conventional society as a safe haven for gambling patrons who can take control of their lives through participating in offtrack betting. However illusory that control might be, Zola noted:

> By 'beating the system', outsmarting it by rational means, these men demonstrated they can exercise control and that for a brief moment they can control their fate. Offtrack betting is thus a kind of escape. It denies the vagaries of life and gives these men a chance to regulate it. (p. 360)

After studying racetrack patrons, Herman (1967) rejected the idea that gambling is either deviant or a form of escapism. Observing members of several social classes betting on horse races, Herman was impressed with the bettors' discipline, composure and rational decision-making. Herman concluded that horse race gamblers emulate traditional entrepreneurial practices:

> In short, commercialized gambling offers to many people an efficient means of enhanced self-esteem and gratification in a culture in which satisfactions are increasingly likely to be found in enterprises of consumption rather than production. (p. 104)

Having observed participants in friendly poker games, Zurcher (1970) introduced the concept of "ephemeral role" to describe behavior patterns that exist within a gambling situation. Poker playing ostensibly provides participants with temporary satisfactions, unavailable in the more lasting roles of their everyday-life positions. The subjects of Zurcher's study were not gamblers on the fringe of society but

professionals and college professors. Zurcher did not study gambling from a social problem perspective, but instead sought to identify some of the social-psychological benefits that derive from the widely played game of poker.

Abt, Smith, and McGurrin (1985) viewed gambling as occurring within social boundaries that create a social organization and symbolic meaning system. The social organization and symbolic meaning system serve to focus behavior, as well as to generate new roles and identities within the gambling situation; these include achieved social status, personal achievements, self-esteem, and group cohesion. Based on Goffman's (1961) paradigm, Abt et al. claimed that gambling is simultaneously an escape from the "real world" and a "world-building activity." Furthermore, Abt et al. contended that the social system boundaries of the track or casino overlap the system boundaries of the nongambling world and borrow many of its social norms, cultural values, and rituals of social interaction.

Holtgraves (1988) stated that a primary attraction of gambling is the opportunity to present to oneself and others a desired image. First, a general identity may be available simply by engaging in the activity of gambling. Second, gambling allows for the presentation of specific situated identities based on how one gambles, for example, showing character. Even if imputations of character are not forthcoming, gambling allows for the self-presentation of

prestige and competence based on something as random as a favorable outcome or simply displaying appropriate expressive behaviors.

Lynch (1990) in studying regular poker-machine patrons in Sydney, Australia, found that playing a poker-machine was neither a psychological nor a social problem in the eyes of the regular players. They did not refer to themselves as immoral or deviant, and they did not describe their experiences in pathological terms. The reasons regular poker machine players gave for their involvement included relaxation, excitement and stimulation, status, fun and entertainment. Lynch also noted that few poker-machine players realistically expected to win huge jackpots. Instead, their playing was sustained not by fantasies of wealth, but by dreams of hope. The creation of hope becomes an end in itself and a form of non-monetary reward. Regulars interviewed by Lynch maintained their poker-machine playing was mainly a social experience. A majority of pathological gamblers interviewed by Bergh and Kulhorn (1994) reported socializing mainly with gambling peers whom they met mostly in gambling settings.

Based on their studies of compulsive gamblers, Custer and Milt (1986) proposed three reasons why people gamble: (1) need for affection and approval, that is, to be wanted and liked; (2) need for recognition, that is, to be regarded as a person of worth; (3) confidence in one's ability to deal effectively

with life's problems and to garner its rewards.

Participant Observation Studies

By participating in the gambling scene either as gamblers or as workers, participant observation researchers provide detailed descriptions of gambling behavior in natural settings. Although limited in number, these studies utilizing ethnographic methods reveal characteristics of gamblers not found in other types of gambling studies. Rosecrance (1988) claimed that ethnographic studies are the only way to fully understand gamblers and their world.

Goffman (1967) worked as a Blackjack dealer and croupier in Nevada casinos to gain an intimate knowledge of gaming behavior. Goffman theorised that gambling participation serves as a surrogate for risk-taking that has been effectively removed from modern life by the bureaucratization of social and economic arrangements. By engaging in voluntary risk-taking, the gambler can demonstrate character strength; such demonstrations, although culturally valued, generally are unavailable in ordinary life situations. Players who engage in gambling action can exhibit valued traits such as courage, gameness, integrity, and composure.

Drawing upon a lifetime of personal experience at the race track, Scott (1968) reported that the world of horse racing centred on problems of information. He stressed that horse race bettors, in their study of form and betting

patterns, are engaging in a rational activity. Although Scott acknowledged that deviant types such as touts and unethical horse trainers can be found at the racetrack, the vast majority of gamblers are not deviants but ordinary people searching for the right horse to bet on. Ostensibly, these gamblers are adhering to the same norms of rationality that guide everyday situations.

As a long time regular poker player in Gardena, California, Hayano (1982) conducted an "auto-ethnography" study on his "own people." In his study, Hayano placed emphasis on the social aspects of licensed cardroom poker playing. After chronicling the life and work of professional poker players, he found that the pros, regulars, and employees formed a subcultural core. Within this core social relationships were marked by a shared sense of being. For the members of this solid core, friendships were developed between players. Besides playing poker the cardroom offered a range of goods and services to its subcultural regulars. A patron could watch television, eat, make outside gambling bets, find drinking buddies, and perhaps even sexual companions.

Enhanced by thirty-two years of gambling experience, Rosecrance (1985, 1986, 1988) used a participant observation strategy to study several gambling scenes. His ethnographic research identified social rewards as an important part of gambling activity. Inveterate horse players persisted in the activity because the rewards of horse race gambling exceeded

the costs. Social interaction, sensory stimulation, potential economic gain, decision-making opportunities, and demonstration of character were magnets that drew and kept players in the gambling scene. Participants interacted with one another and established networks of association with other gamblers. The significance of membership in these social worlds was further enhanced by a mutual rebellion against the impersonal, bureaucratic character of modern life. Rosecrance maintained that continued gambling participation is mainly to sustain the social rewards of these relationships.

Summary

As previously discussed, most social science explanations have focused on idiosyncratic or psychopathological motivations for gambling behavior. Such studies tend to conceptualize gambling activity as either socially deviant or as functionally pathological, a behavior that must be explained in terms of extraordinary personality traits, compulsiveness, irrationality, or self-destructive tendencies (Abt et al., 1985). This approach places an excessive emphasis on the formal outcome of the game (economic gain or loss) while the social structural and cultural factors in determining the onset and outcome of gambling behavior have largely been ignored. This approach also exaggerates the influence of individual motivation to the neglect of the social context; for example, many regular gamblers are rooted

in a gambling subculture with informal norms, beliefs and values, and the gambling institution eventually becomes an integral part of their lives. These studies do not explain the overwhelming presence of psychologically normal individuals nor the overrepresentation of members of lower income groups and relatively disadvantaged people in most Canadian gambling institutions. By contrast, the sociological studies attempt to ascertain the effect of social and cultural factors on gambling behavior.

In spite of the fact that Hayano (1982), Martinez (1983), Abt, Smith, and McGurrin (1985), and Rosecrance (1988) recognized the importance of social relationships and services of the gambling social world in the lives of gamblers, they did not examine the relationship gamblers had with the outside society. They also did not consider the social structural and cultural factors that determine the magnitude of social rewards offered gamblers. As a result, we still do not know why some individuals do not participate in gambling at all, and why a significant percentage of those who do participate, do not become regular players. Moreover, these researchers have not analyzed the effect that regular participation in the gambling social world may have on gamblers. For example, by suggesting that the variables in their synoptic model of gambling behavior are unidirectional, that is, the social structural and cultural factors have effects on gambling behavior but not vice versa, Abt et al. (1985) overlooked the

fact that the action of gambling can also have an impact on the social structural and cultural factors; for instance, regular gambling can negatively affect one's social-economic status, job opportunities, and educational achievement.

The key characteristics in Walters' (1994a, 1994b) conception of a gambling lifestyle are psychological in nature, even though lifestyle is mainly a social and cultural construction. Walters did, however, recognize the importance of social structural factors (which are not considered in his theory) in treating problem gamblers. For example, he recommended that problem gamblers in therapy form friendships with non-gamblers, develop other rewarding activities and hobbies, and acquire life and occupational skills to ease their transition back into the outside world.

The present study extends previous work in this area by focusing on the relationship of regular gamblers both with the gambling institution, and outside society. This study attempts to answer the following research questions from both psychological and sociological perspectives: (1) Why is it that regular casino gamblers continue to gamble while losing? (2) What is it that attracts and sustains regular casino gamblers to stay in action? (3) What are the demographic profiles of regular casino gamblers? and (4) How does persistent gambling affect regular casino gamblers' lives?

Chapter Three

PROVISIONAL THEORETICAL MODEL

Unlike gambling researchers who frame their studies in a social-psychological perspective with a focus on idiosyncratic or psychopathological motivations for gambling behavior (Abt, McGurrin, & Smith, 1985), researchers utilizing the participant observation approach concentrate on the social relationships and amenities found in gambling settings (Hayano, 1982; Martinez, 1983; Abt et al., 1985; Rosecrance, 1985, 1988).

Hayano (1982) found that professional and regular poker players as well as cardroom employees formed a subcultural core which fostered friendly social interaction. The cardroom also offered a range of goods and services for the convenience of its regulars. Martinez (1983) also viewed the gambling scene as a subculture whose formal and informal norms serve to reduce the tension level in the game and contribute to a smooth flow of action. Whether players conform to or violate these norms affects their acceptance or rejection in the subculture.

A study by Abt and her colleagues (1985) confirmed Goffman's theory of games being world building activities. The gaming world consists of a distinct social organization and symbolic meaning system where gamblers purportedly have a better chance to achieve social status, self-esteem, and group

cohesion than they do in the outside world. Rosecrance's research (1985, 1988) on inveterate horse players showed that players persisted in the activity because the rewards of horse race gambling exceeded the costs. The rewards of social interaction, sensory stimulation, potential economic gain, decision making opportunities, and demonstration of character attract and keep players in the gambling scene.

This study proposes a theoretical model that further explores the social rewards and social arrangements available in a gambling institution with a view toward determining their impact on the sustained involvement of regular casino gamblers. Moreover, an important social structural factor overlooked in previous studies has been added to the mix: namely, the bearing that outside societal forces may have on reinforcing one's gambling behavior. Finally, this study incorporates key demographic variables in an attempt to explain the behavior of regular casino gamblers.

In addition to recognizing the constraining power of social structures on the persistence of regular casino gambling, the proposed model takes into account the subjective experience of individuals in determining whether or not they will try casino gambling and whether or not they will incorporate it into their lifestyles.

The combination of sociology and cognitive psychology, or the objective power of social structures and meaningful subjects in the model is intended to overcome the limitations

of purely micro or macro perspectives and to provide a more comprehensive understanding of gambling behavior. Silverman (1985) concurred with this approach as he noted:

> a narrow concern with social structures precludes a proper understanding of the processes of interpretation through which they are reproduced and, sometimes, changed. Conversely, interactional sociology has constantly to be aware of the real structures which constrain and enable social action. There is an urgent need to synthesise both [micro and macro] approaches. (p. 77)

The provisional theoretical model developed for testing in this study is based on: (1) a review of the related literature; (2) one-and-a-half years of participant observation at Casino ABS Argyll, Edmonton, Alberta, working as a Blackjack dealer, which included informal talks with players and casino staff, and tuning in to players' table conversations; and (3) an exploratory probe into the relationships between key variables. The proposed model is a theoretical framework designed for further investigation and verification. The purpose of generating the provisional theoretical model is to distill and coalesce what has been learned about gamblers so as to guide further research. Much of the background information utilized in designing this model came from participant observation studies. Hayano (1982) commented on the inherent advantages of fieldwork in gambling settings when he recommended that:

> to achieve qualitative depth and comprehend game activities in this particular setting, an ethnographer can do no better than to employ a judicious mix of both participation and observation. Basically, this technique means hanging around with

> your eyes and ears open, relying on a hodge-podge of tactics, intuition, luck and some crude tools to expose a few rough stones. (p. 154)

Gambling is not a unitary phenomenon. There are many forms of gambling and types of gamblers; there are great differences between various games and motives for playing them. Therefore, this study is restricted to one type of gambling institution, an urban casino in Alberta, and one type of gambler, that is, regular players, who visit the casino an average of at least three times a week.

The Gambling Institution

An institution is the organization of a public (or semi-public) character involving a directive body, and usually a building or physical establishment of some sort, designated to serve some socially recognized and authorized end (Fairchild, 1976). Most gambling settings, but particularly casinos, fit this definition of an institution. Casino management represents the directive body of the organization. Gambling activity always takes place in the same physical structure, and in Canada, the objective of a gambling establishment, apart from providing entertainment to its patrons, is to generate revenue for charitable groups. Therefore, the gambling scene or gambling place can be considered a gambling institution (Martinez, 1983).

A different understanding of gamblers and their environment can be attained by viewing a gambling

establishment as an institution as opposed to treating it as a gambling scene or simply as a place to gamble. Martinez (1983) maintained that a gambling scene is created whenever people congregate to stake something of value on an uncertain outcome. He explained that the gambling scene consists of the gambling industry which organizes and controls the games and the gamblers who partake in the action. Martinez's model focused on individual players and the interaction between them and, as a result, is ambivalent about the relationship between individuals and the gambling establishment. Similarly, to treat the gambling establishment merely as a gambling place (Hayano, 1982; Herman, 1976; Lynch, 1990) trivializes the importance of the gambling establishment in relation to gamblers. The proposed model portrays the gambling establishment as an institution because it is important to understand the reliance of gamblers on the institution, as well as the impact of institutionalization on the players. The proposed model assumes that the institution, like society, shapes individuals and is shaped by them.

There are many kinds of institutions in our society, each with distinct characteristics. A specific category of institutions identified by Goffman (1961) are "total institutions." A total institution is defined as a place of confinement or partial confinement where persons of a specified type live, following a formalized life routine under the control and direction of a bureaucratic staff, and having

limited contact with the rest of society. Examples of total institutions include prisons, hospitals, army camps, and boarding schools. Other institutions, like department stores and post offices, are open to anyone who is decently behaved. These kind of institutions have a few fixed members who provide a service and a continuously changing set of members who receive the service. These are considered "open institutions."

Institutional Arrangements

Gambling institutions have characteristics of both total and open institutions. On the surface, a gambling institution resembles an open institution if one considers recreational players whose visits may be "one night out" to try their luck. However, when one is familiar with the setting, it becomes obvious that many faces are the same, day in and day out. This makes the casino environment similar to Goffman's (1961) "total institution" for these regular gamblers. The casino takes on institutional characteristics similar to a total "institution," such as institutional completeness, encompassing tendency, and subculture.

Goffman's (1961) concept of a total institution is useful in studying the regulars in a gambling scene. However, in this study the term total institution is used as a metaphor, because it is recognized that a gambling venue is not as restrictive and circumscribing as the organizational arrangements Goffman spelled out. Examples of Goffman's total

institutions include a prison, a mental hospital, a ship on a long voyage and so forth. Characteristics of Goffman's ideal-type which are not shared by gambling institutions include: (1) uniforms; (2) physical barriers such as locked doors, high walls, and barbed wire; and (3) restrictive social mobility between staff and the managed group. A gambling venue is obviously not as all-inclusive as the above examples; nevertheless, the concept of a total institution has some relevance in explaining the behavior of casino regulars.

Institutional Completeness. Institutional completeness is an important characteristic of casinos that contributes to the sustained participation of regular gamblers. Goffman (1961) spoke of human needs being fulfilled in three major spheres of life--dwelling, playing, and working, while noting that individuals tend to dwell, play, and work in different places, with different co-participants, under different authorities, and without an overall rational plan. For the hard-core regulars in most gambling institutions, however, nearly all three aspects of life can be discharged under the same roof.

A gambling institution is a place where players can "watch television, eat, make outside gambling bets, meet friends, and find drinking buddies and sexual companions..." (Hayano, 1982, p. 137). The casino observed in this study offers similar amenities plus a recently obtained liquor licence. The gambling institution is simultaneously a place

of work and leisure for the regulars. Many casino regulars consider gambling a form of work. As for the leisure part, the tingle of excitement caused by the uncertainty of gambling is satisfying enough to meet many players' entertainment needs. No gambling situation is ever quite the same; each new Blackjack hand brings a different combination of variables and renewed optimism, thus making the game alluring and stimulating for the regular players.

The more human needs met by an institution, the more complete the institution. The institutional completeness of a group reinforces solidarity (Breton, 1964), and contributes to segregation from the wider society (Driedger & Church, 1974).

Encompassing Tendency. Goffman (1961) described encompassing tendency as follows: "Every institution captures something of the time and interest of its members and provides something of a world for them; in brief, every institution has encompassing tendencies" (p. 4). However, the encompassing tendency of the gambling institution is more apparent than most other institutions, simply because gambling is more time-consuming, its activity more fascinating, and its world more complete. One consequence of gambling's encompassing tendency is to separate its participants from the outside world. As a result, regular gamblers find it hard to leave the institution, both daily and permanently, because their isolation from the outside world produces strong feelings of

group identification. For many regular gamblers, participation in the activities of the gambling institution becomes their daily reason for being. Disengagement from the institution is discomforting and anxiety-producing for these regulars.

Antagonistic Relationship and Gambling Subculture. The antagonistic player-house relationship and a gambling subculture are characteristic institutional arrangements found in a casino environment. The adversarial nature of the player versus the house leads to the formation of a gambling subculture with distinctive values, beliefs, and informal norms. The key values of the casino subculture are "beating the system" and "cooperation."

Social Rewards

A casino is capable of providing its participants with many social rewards on the basis of its unique institutional arrangements. These include:

Group Affiliation. Because casino gambling takes place in a group setting, and given that gamblers like to associate with other gamblers, group affiliation is a likely social reward for casino regulars. Group solidarity is shown frequently by players who perceive themselves on the same side against their common enemy, the house. Moreover, because the value of cooperating to beat the system is so strong, a "fate interdependence" is fostered among the players which generates group affiliation and cohesion.

Emotional and Moral Support. Emotional and moral support

are other significant social rewards available to casino regulars. Because of the unfavorable odds against casino players, nearly all participants will lose money if they keep playing for a prolonged period. Thus, the casino subculture can also be perceived as a congregation of losers (Livingston, 1974b). Realizing that they are losing money generates anxiety and depression for most people. Being with other regulars can help mitigate the discomfiting experience of losing money. The presence of others who are in the same situation can provide consolation and reassurance, and hence reduce anxious feelings. On the other hand, one's own emotions and feelings can be understood and coped with more effectively by means of observing how others handle a similar circumstance.

Regular gamblers, who will lose most of the time, empathetically seek out the company of others in similar situations. The best place to meet these similar others is in a gambling institution. Additionally, being with others who do not disapprove of one another's presence in a quasi-stigmatized environment provides solace and encouragement for the regular casino goers.

Self-esteem. With the development of industrial bureaucracies and with the more recent emergence of automation in modern society, lower and middle-income workers are experiencing occupational deprivation and a separation from traditional sources of self-esteem. Individuals depend on the judgment and feedback of others to ascertain how well they

carry out their roles. This process, to a large degree, determines one's level of self-esteem. Participation in a gambling activity can help boost self-esteem because gamblers, most of whom are from a working class background (at least in Alberta casinos), are interminably evaluating one another's performance by their subcultural beliefs and informal norms. "High esteem is given to those whose activities affirm the informal norms of the group, and low esteem to those whose activities violate them" (Martinez, 1983, p. 28). In the casino subculture, higher esteem and respect are bestowed by fellow players on those who cooperate to preserve the "appropriate" pattern of the cards.

Another possible source of self-esteem in the gambling institution is the opportunity of developing a sense of personal achievement, a social need that is very important but may well be denied in other areas of the regular gambler's life. The casino can provide an outlet for gamblers to exhibit their skill, knowledge, and bravado (Thompson, 1991).

Social Status. Given the choice, humans generally gravitate to social situations which place them in a higher status. However, for casino regulars, real-life situations that may improve their social status are either limited or simply unavailable. The casino, therefore, becomes a haven for many of its adherents where their needs for social status can be satisfied--especially those in lower income groups or those otherwise disadvantaged.

It should be stressed that while regular gamblers do develop alliances with other players that allow for meaningful interaction in the casino, their relationship can be described as comrades more than friends. Rosecrance (1985) made this distinction in his study of persistent horse players; they cohered around their mutual interest in gambling but might not have any other common interests, nor might they be especially fond of one another. In most cases they did not routinely socialize outside of the gambling scene.

Role dispossession is a common experience among participants in a gambling institution. Entering a casino, one passes through a "symbolic door" (Cavan, 1966) whereupon roles in outside society are no longer significant. "No one is supposed to care from which race, religion, or social class one comes, at least for the duration of the game" (Abt et al., 1985, p. 68). There is always the possibility that one can achieve a higher status in the casino, no matter what role or social status he or she has in the outside society. This status elevation is conditional on adherence to the norms of the gambling subculture, longevity in the social scene, and a willingness to risk substantial sums of money. The longer players have attended a casino, the more knowledge about the game they are perceived to have, and the more likely a rapport with other players and the casino staff will be established. These relationships represent "instant status in the gambling fraternity" (Abt et al., 1985, p. 72). A gambler's status in

the institution is achieved rather than ascribed. As a result, the gambling institution is perceived as a "just world" by those with lower ascribed statuses such as immigrants, ethnic minorities, physically disabled, and the elderly. Here, they all start the race from the same starting point. Rosecrance (1985) also noticed the potential for status levelling that is afforded gambling regulars. In his study of inveterate horse players, Rosecrance commented on how gambling participation can garner respect that is usually unobtainable in the larger society. While in action with gambling confreres, the gambler can "be a somebody and not a nobody" (p. 100).

Salient Identity. Although social rewards are possible in the casino gambling environment, they are not absolute or assured outcomes. Their materialization depends in good part on the identity salience of the participants.

> Identities ... are conceived as being organized into a salience hierarchy. This hierarchical organization of identities is defined by the probabilities of each of the various identities within it being brought into play in a given situation. The location of an identity in this hierarchy is, by definition, its salience. (Stryker & Serpe, 1982, p. 206)

The more salient an identity, the more likely it will be brought into play in a given situation. For example, a regular gambler will have an identity within the casino as well as identities in outside society. Those regulars holding low prestige jobs are mindful that their outside identities are not as salient as their inside identities, which is the

persona of a skilled and respected gambler. Outside identities are suppressed in the casino while inside identities become paramount. As a result, regular gamblers increase their self-esteem, sense of personal achievement, and social status within the gambling subculture. In contrast, a person with a prestigious job may experience a drop in social status in the casino. Thus, the salient identity of a gambler is a probable social reward for casino regulars.

A salient identity is a combination of subjective feeling and social recognition. First, individuals must feel they have a salient identity within the gambling institution; second, this salient identity must be socially sustained by specific group affiliations. Those gamblers with inferior identities in the outside society come to the casino, at least in part, to seek out appreciative others who will recognize and confirm their identity as competent gamblers. As Holtgraves (1988) stated: "One of the attractions of gambling is the opportunity to present to oneself and to others a desired identity" (p. 78).

Regular Casino Gamblers' Conflicts with Outside Society

Loss of Outside Social Networks. The casino provides an alternative reality for many regulars. Copious amounts of time and energy are devoted to gambling, and most of their monetary and emotional resources are invested in it. The act of gambling itself and the comforts of the gambling venue become

an integral part of their lives. Unfortunately for the gambler, this preoccupation may cause friction with outside society, the prime conflict being an erosion of social networks. A heavy gambling involvement may abrade the gambler's business connections, friendships, and interactions with significant others, mainly because of the long hours spent gambling. The lack of shared meaning systems and experiences isolate casino regulars from their nongambling friends. As a result, gamblers come to rely on casino friendships for social and emotional support, which further removes them from outside society. This observation was supported by Bergh and Kulhorn's (1994) finding that regular gamblers associated mainly with their gambling peers.

Disculturation. Some privations caused by a commitment to casino gambling, such as the loss of outside relationships, are replaceable inasmuch as the friendships formed inside the casino eventually become more meaningful. But some losses are irrevocable --for example, the hours spent gambling dissipates time that could be used for educational or job advancement. This time-loss inevitably leads to another conflict with the outside society--disculturation--which refers to the loss of or failure to acquire qualifications required to succeed in the wider society (Goffman, 1961). Casino regulars who are marginalized from society face a dilemma when they start gambling; their commitment to the casino makes it harder to thrive in the outside society, which drives them even more

urgently to the gambling institution to meet their needs for esteem, achievement, and status.

Value Conflicts. Regular casino attendance may also create value conflicts with outside society. The subcultural value of cooperation in the casino is in opposition to the value of competitive individualism stressed in the external world. Casino regulars are not only probable losers in the gambling games because of the overwhelming house odds, but they also become losers in the fierce competition for esteem, achievement, and status in the wider society. Because of their socioeconomic background, ascribed status, or lack of motivation, they may simply decide to abandon the "rat race" and withdraw into their cooperative gambling fraternity.

Casino regulars perceive the casino as being a just world where all members are treated equally, in part because gambling can be seen as "naked economic interest" by both players and management. In the casino, "where money is the stake and the reward we can find a form of ideal democratic encounter where nothing counts but money and the ability to make it" (Abt et al., 1985, p. 69). It is understandable that gamblers, especially those marginalized in the outside society, unfavorably compare the intolerant outside world with the gambling subculture which they find more secure, comfortable, and attractive.

Stigmatization. Whether casino regulars think of themselves as gamblers or members of the gambling subculture

is dependent on the stigmatized perception of gamblers held by nongamblers. Thus, group membership can be ascribed by outsiders to individuals who do not think of themselves as members of a group. For instance, some players may not abide by all of the central values and informal norms of the gambling subculture and, as a result, would not consider themselves hard-core members of the subculture. But their frequent attendance in the casino is perceived by others as evidence of their being a member of a non-conformist group. The stereotyping and differential treatment derived from stigmatization may ultimately make membership in this subculture a very real fact of life. The labelled individual may well embrace the gambling institution in a rebellious reaction and become an inveterate gambler. In his book devoted to the notion of stigma, Goffman (1963) stated:

> In most cases, [the stigmatized individual] will find that there are sympathetic others who are ready to adopt his standpoint in the world and to share with him the feeling that he is human and 'essentially' normal in spite of appearances and in spite of his own self-doubts. (pp. 19-20)

As a consequence, the stigmatization may contribute partly to the formation of this group of hard-core gamblers who accompany each other "for moral support and for the comfort of feeling at home, at ease, accepted as a person who really is like any other normal person" (Goffman, 1963, p. 20). Perhaps this is one reason why the regulars comment that people in the casino are "nice and friendly."

Commitment to the Casino Lifestyle and Problem Gambling

Individuals bond to social entities, such as a nation, an institution, a group, a family, a person, or an ideology. No matter what the social entity, these linkages exhibit certain common features. If we assume that regulars cohere around the gambling institution, the common features of involvement, attachment, and commitment will be found in this bond as well.

Being involved in the casino means participating in the games on a regular basis and taking an active interest in happenings at the casino. Regular gamblers show their appreciation for the gambling institution in the following ways: making friends with other players, cheerfully cooperating with other players, and through their willingness to learn basic game strategies. This attachment is the "warm" side of bonding to the entity. Individuals can feel a sense of belonging, identification, and emotional attachment (Goffman, 1961). This attachment is strengthened by the fact that players stand to elevate their esteem and status within the casino subculture.

A commitment to the social entity is the final and most important way to bond oneself to it. Commitment is displayed by investing money, time, and energy in pursuing a gambling life style. This commitment is the "cold" side of cleaving to the entity. The regular gamblers risk losing more money than they can afford because of the intensity, frequency, and

duration of their involvement. No matter how skilled the player, there is no way to succeed against the unfavorable house odds. The longer they play, the more certain they are to lose. They might also be sacrificing job advancement opportunities because of the time and energy spent gambling, and they might be relinquishing friendships and a previous identity because they are now stigmatized as marginal people. In spite of the obvious downside, a commitment to the gambling institution is the number one priority. Without the commitment, the involvement and the attachment are not attainable. "No pain, no gain." Clearly, regular gamblers consider the social rewards they stand to gain in the casino as acceptable trade-offs that outweigh any suffering.

A commitment to a gambling institution is a symptom of problem gambling. Rosecrance (1988) contended that problem gambling is a more accurate term than compulsive or pathological gambling, which connotes psychological aberrations not found in the majority of troubled gamblers. He defined problem gambling as the loss of excessive amounts of money through gambling. Moreover, he identified two elements contributing to problem gambling: commitment to gambling and faulty gambling strategy (included here are lack of knowledge of the game and the odds as well as poor money management). Of the two, commitment to gambling, as indicated by playing longer and betting higher stakes, is perhaps the more important. In fact, the amount of money lost gambling is

often determined by the length of play and the size of stake. Cutting the duration of play and the bet size is probably the most effective playing and money management strategy for most regulars in the long run. Likewise, Martinez (1983) suggested that total commitment to and involvement in gambling may be related to compulsive gambling. Lesieur (1979) viewed pathological gamblers as being caught in a spiral of escalating commitment to gambling. Both Dickerson's (1993) and Griffiths' (1995) studies showed a correlation between regular gamblers and problem gamblers in terms of duration, frequency of sessions, and the subjective moods--depression and excitement. The only difference between the two groups was the matter of magnitude. This finding suggests that regulars may turn into problem gamblers if they play longer and more often, and get more depressed at losing and more excited at winning, in other words, becoming more committed to gambling.

However, commitment to the gambling institution, as introduced in this study, goes deeper than merely being a gambling regular. It includes an emotional attachment to the institution, being at ease with the new identity formed in the setting, and a faith and trust in the gambling subculture. Excessive losses could affect the subsistence level of the player and his family and may mean that the player cannot afford to gamble anymore. The disastrous part of this scenario for regular players is being cut off from the social rewards which ostensibly are available to them only in the casino.

Worst of all, this insolvency problem forces them back into the outside society with its many annoyances. This could be one reason why problem gamblers show symptoms of restlessness and irritability when unable to gamble. To avoid this discomfort, gamblers will take drastic measures to escape the incompatible outside world and to return to the congenial atmosphere of the casino. These include borrowing money; ignoring social, occupational, or legal responsibilities; and giving up other recreational pursuits. Problem gambling, then, may not only be a loss of control but also an indication of being unable to cope with routines and realities in the outside world.

Theoretical Model

As seen in Figure 1, the proposed theoretical model has two major dimensions: social rewards and conflicts with outside society. These two dimensions determine to a large degree the commitment of gamblers to the gambling institution.

Social rewards include group affiliation, emotional and moral support, self-esteem, social status, and salient identity.[1] The institutional conditions make these social rewards possible for casino gamblers. These conditions are

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[1]It should be noted that apart from the social rewards emphasized in this model, there are other possible rewards such as sensory stimulation and the potential for economic gain (Rosecrance, 1985) which are present in most casinos no matter what the institutional arrangements are.

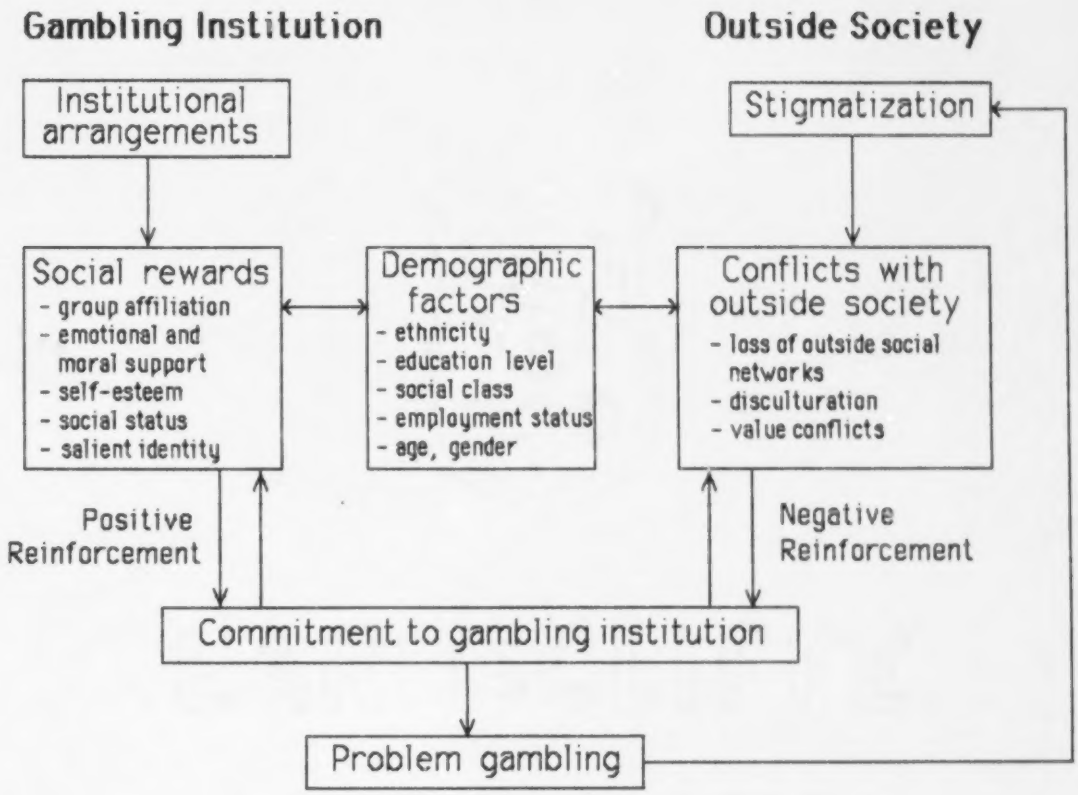

Figure 1. Proposed Model to Explain the Relationships between Gamblers, the Gambling Institution, and Outside Society

institutional completeness, encompassing tendency, antagonistic relationship, and gambling subculture. To illustrate, the adversarial relationship between players and the house, coupled with the cooperation among the players, helps facilitate group affiliation and elicits emotional support. Furthermore, an environment is created whereby self-esteem and social status can be enhanced.

Conflicts with outside society include loss of social networks, disculturation, and discordant values. In addition, the stigmatization of the gambler's role can magnify the gambler's incompatibility with outside society.

The social rewards and the external conflicts influence one another. The loss of opportunity to advance in the outside society makes the social rewards available in the gambling institution more enticing for the gamblers; as a result, their gambling identities become more salient. Conversely, the social rewards available in the gambling institution make the negative consequences of dealing with outside society harder to accept. Consequently, regular gamblers conclude that their identities in outside society are less gratifying, thus making the gambling environment even more captivating.

A "double reinforcement" process thus occurs: social rewards are positive reinforcers that increase the degree of commitment to the gambling institution, whereas conflicts with the outside society are the negative reinforcers which are temporarily removed when the players reenter the gambling

scene. In other words, gambling participation is compensated for by group affiliation and the possibility of achieving higher levels of esteem and status, whereas going back into outside society could be likened to being forced into a life of indenture. Therefore, gamblers, repelled by thoughts of fitting into the outside society, return to the gambling institution, their "social heaven" (Rosecrance, 1988), to regain their sense of pride and self-respect.

A commitment to the gambling scene is a probable consequence of participating in such an institutionalized environment. A commitment to the gambling institution also begets social rewards and produces conflicts with outside society. This gambling commitment can lead to meaningful social rewards in the gambling setting but exacerbate the struggle individuals may face in the outside society. Moreover, a commitment to the gambling institution may result in problem gambling. Out of control gambling is likely to damage the gambler's reputation and thus aggravate the strife they experience in the outside society.

Key demographic factors in the model are age, gender, immigration status, ethnicity, marital status, income, education, employment status, and social standing. These are the modifying factors that influence one's commitment to the gambling institution, which in turn can affect the social rewards one receives. Because role dispossession is possible in the gambling institution, it is perceived as an egalitarian

world, especially to those with lower ascribed statuses in the outside society (immigrants, ethnic minorities, the poorly educated, and the physically disabled, for example). Therefore, the available social rewards are more significant to them, resulting in more salient identities in the gambling institution than can be found in the outside society. Secondly, demographic characteristics can also modify these conflicts with the outside society. Gamblers from disadvantaged groups, who face inequities in attempting to realize the cultural goals of the society, face more hardships when operating in the outside world, partly because of their marginal status and partly because of being labelled gamblers. Consequently, a regular gambler from a disadvantaged background may be more committed to the gambling institution and more prone to problem gambling.

The proposed theoretical model presumes that a person's commitment to a gambling institution is dependent on the interaction of two key components: the social rewards available in the gambling institution and an inability or unwillingness to conform to outside society. The effect of these two components can in turn be mitigated or enhanced by an individual's socio-demographic profile. However, it should be pointed out that many regular gamblers go through cycles of abstinence and relapse (Lesieur, 1984, 1992). When external conflicts worsen or when finances are constrained, some gamblers are obliged to leave the gambling scene temporarily

or even permanently.

However, the model does not specify which, if any, variable should be weighted more heavily than others. What the model does infer is a theoretical framework which predicts the relationship between variables. Furthermore, this model was fashioned mainly from observing regular gamblers in a casino environment. Therefore, it may not explain gambling behaviors in other gambling institutions. Nonetheless, the model has the potential to become a substantive theory to explain gambling behaviors in the group-setting and stigmatized gambling institutions such as Bingo, horse racing, and card games. It may also serve as a springboard to the development of a formal theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) explaining and predicting the formation and sustainment of a "subculture."

Derived from this theoretical framework are the following hypotheses, which are tested statistically in a later chapter:

Hypothesis 1. Commitment to the gambling institution is positively related to the social rewards received in the gambling institution.

Hypothesis 1a. Commitment to the gambling institution is positively related to the emotional support (or attitude toward the casino) found in the gambling institution.

Hypothesis 1b. Commitment to the gambling institution is positively related to one's attitude toward gambling (or the moral support).

Hypothesis 2. Commitment to the gambling institution is positively related to conflicts with the outside society.

Hypothesis 2a. Commitment to the gambling institution is negatively related to the levels of life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2b. Commitment to the gambling institution is negatively related to job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3. The more committed one is to the gambling institution, the more likely one is to become a problem gambler.

Hypothesis 4a. Individuals from disadvantaged groups (such as immigrants, ethnic minorities, the unemployed, the poorly educated, and the lower class) are more likely to seek social rewards in a casino and be more prone to having conflicts with the outside society and, therefore, to be more committed to the gambling institution.

Hypothesis 4b. Individuals from disadvantaged groups are more likely to become problem gamblers.

Chapter Four

METHODOLOGY

A theoretical model, no matter how convincing and sound it may seem, is only speculative without verification by means of rigorous methods. In this chapter I detail the methods used in attempting to verify the theoretical model; why these specific methods were selected; how the research procedures were carried out; how the data were analyzed; and the ethical issues surrounding this study.

Research Strategy

For the purpose of this thesis, a single-case study was employed. Several conditions justify a single-case design as being appropriate for studying casino gambling. Casino gambling is perceived as a hard-core gambling activity and is one of the more stigmatized forms of legal gambling (Thompson & Dombrink, 1990). Casinos provide a typical group-setting where social interactions occur. Furthermore, a casino contains exciting and stimulating games which have the potential to be addictive; casino gambling is one of the most addictive gaming forms, along with video lottery machine gambling (Smith, 1992; Walker, 1992), therefore more likely to produce problem gamblers. Hence, a casino can represent a critical case in testing a theory (Yin, 1988)--in this case, testing the hypotheses derived from the provisional

theoretical model. Moreover, a casino can provide a revelatory case previously inaccessible to scientific investigation. The single-case study of casino regulars is, therefore, capable of offering significant insights into the understanding of gambling behavior and its consequences.

The site selected for this case study was Casino ABS Argyll in Edmonton. This setting was chosen primarily for its familiarity and convenience. I worked there as a dealer for two-and-a-half years and had made field observations which led to the generation of the provisional theoretical model.

One of the problems in doing participant observation research is the difficulty in gaining entry to the group under study (Rosecrance, 1988), especially a stigmatized group like casino gamblers. Fortunately, I had already gained access to the setting and become familiar with the surroundings, regular players, and casino staff. Most importantly, I received consent from the casino management after acknowledging my interest in doing research there. The casino management agreed to assist me in distributing questionnaires through the security desk because they were also interested in acquiring information about their clientele.

The unit of analysis for the case study was the group of gamblers in the casino, with emphasis placed on regular players. The population for this study was all the gamblers in the study site over the four month period April-July 1993.

Data Collection Techniques

A triangulation of methodologies was employed to test the proposed theoretical framework. Specifically, participant observation, survey, and in-depth interviews were utilized as the major data collection techniques in this study. Triangulation was chosen mainly because of the complexity of the study and the difficulty of collecting the various types of data required to test and refine the proposed theoretical model. The study explored not only individuals' attitudes and background characteristics, but also their relationships with the outside society and their subcultural interactions. Hence, any of the above research methods were unsuitable by themselves for gathering all the required information. In addition, it was assumed that prospective respondents would not be overly cooperative, which means that one method alone could not be trusted to yield reliable information. A triangulation of methodologies was believed to be helpful in enhancing all major aspects of rigor demanded by scientific inquiry--the internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1983; Jick, 1989).

Participant Observation

I took a peripheral membership role (Adler & Adler, 1988) to collect the participant observation data. The main purpose of participant observation is to obtain an insider's perspective. Thus, the complexities of the interviewees' individual perceptions and experiences can be captured by an

interviewer who knows their terminology, attitudes, and behavior through participant observation. Regular casino gamblers are stigmatized to some extent in our society; consequently, they may not want to expose their lives to the outside world. In this regard, participant observation was thought to be the best, and possibly only way, to establish a rapport with respondents and build the trust and cooperation required to complete the investigation.

Unlike the less structured participant observations used to generate the provisional model, these observations were systematic and aimed at testing the research hypotheses. I pursued a relatively rigid fieldwork schedule and undertook regular systematic observations for a period of one month. Detailed field notes were taken, both on-site (in the lounge where I could oversee the whole playing area) and later at home based on what I had seen and heard that day in the setting.

Sampling Procedure for the Participant Observation. The participant observations, coupled with the field note write-ups, were carried out between January, 1991 and April, 1993. The early part of this effort helped generate the provisional theoretical model.

Systematic observations took place in April 1993. Two types of observation were employed, one being the macro-perspective approach which attempts to grasp the setting and its participants as a whole. Various days of the week and

times of the day were sampled during twenty-two such observations. In the micro-perspective approach only regular players were observed as my plan was to scrutinize regular players and their interactions with others in the casino. I chose at random a regular who had just entered the casino. A total of seventeen individuals were observed in this fashion for the micro-perspective probe.

Survey

A twenty-four question, self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the survey data (see Appendix A). The dependent variable, commitment to the gambling institution, was operationalized as the combination of the respondents' average frequency of play, length of play, average wager, and level of engagement in leisure activities. In the questionnaire, these variables were measured by: frequency of play (question 1), length of play (question 2), average wager (question 3), and involvement in leisure activities (question 23). These four components constituted an unweighted additive commitment scale, with higher scores indicating a greater degree of commitment, meaning that the respondent played in the particular casino more often and for longer time periods, wagered more money each hand, and engaged in fewer outside leisure activities. The ranges on each of these variables were frequency of play: 0 (never played) to 8 (everyday); length of play: 1 point for every year played; average wager played: 1 ($1-4) to 8 ($50 or more); and leisure activities: -1 point

for every one activity engaged in. To avoid acquiring a negative figure after the addition for some cases, (in which the respondents had high levels of involvement in leisure activities, subsequently having high minus points for the scale of leisure activities, and meanwhile having low scores in frequency of play, length of play, and average wager), another ten points were arbitrarily added to the sum of the four scales for all the cases.

The independent variables were emotional support or attitude toward the casino (question 7, score range: 6 to 42); attitude toward gambling or moral support (question 8, score range: 6 to 42); life satisfaction (question 9, score range: 4 to 28); job satisfaction (question 22, score range: 1 to 6). The first three variables were measured using the semantic-differential technique, consisting of a number of seven-point bipolar rating scales, with each extreme defined by an adjective. The variable of job satisfaction was measured by a single six-point rating scale, ranging from very dissatisfied (1 point) to very satisfied (6 points). A higher score on all of these scales indicated a more favorable response.

In assessing the relationship between commitment to the gambling institution and problem gambling, problem gambling was the dependent variable which was measured by responses to ten yes-or-no questions adopted from the Gamblers Anonymous

Questionnaire (question 24),[1] while the commitment to the gambling institution became the independent variable.

Demographic variables included age (question 11 in the questionnaire); gender (question 12); immigration status (question 13); ethnicity (question 14); marital status (question 15); language--first language learned as a child (question 16); income (question 17); education level (question 19); employment status (question 20); social status (question 21), as measured by the Revised Occupational Rating Scale from Warner, Meeker, and Eells' Index of Status Characteristics (Miller, 1970). Scales measuring the demographic variables were adopted from the questionnaire used in the Alberta Survey 1991, conducted by the Population Research Laboratory, Department of Sociology, University of Alberta. Some categories in the age and income scales were combined to suit the current sample.

Other questions--perceived gambling win-loss ratio (question 4), largest bet (question 5), involvement in other forms of gambling (question 6), casino likes and dislikes

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[1]The researcher selected ten questions out of the twenty questions in the Gamblers Anonymous Questionnaire to shorten the questionnaire. It is worth noting that it was suggested that any individual who answered yes to 7 or more of the questions be concerned about being or becoming a compulsive gambler. However, Custer and Milt (1985) claimed that the critical figure indicating compulsive gambling should be twelve. However, the scale consisting of these ten questions was intended primarily to measure the variable of problem gambling rather than the prevalence rate. Thus, it might be an inaccurate instrument for estimating the problem gambling rate.

(question 10), members in household (question 18)--were not directly related to the hypotheses or research problems, but were expected to yield important information about the behavior and attitudes of casino gamblers. The casino management asked to have the question on casino likes and dislikes on the questionnaire to gain information that might help their operation.

Sampling Procedure of the Survey. It was intended that the questionnaire be distributed over a period of one week to all players entering the casino and later collected by casino personnel (the security guards at the desk located close to the main entrance). Unfortunately, the guards were unable to give out a single questionnaire in one week, even though they tried persuading players to fill out the questionnaire. The main reason given by prospective respondents for refusing to cooperate was that they perceived themselves and casinos to be "enemies" competing against one another. This glitch caused a change in plans which meant my approaching players in the lounge area and asking them to complete the questionnaire. This was done over a period of two months (in May and June 1993). Therefore, the unit of study for the survey was not the whole population in the casino, as originally planned, but a sample of it. The procedure used can not be called probability sampling; rather, it is "purposive" sampling, which assumably is a subgroup that is typical or representative of the population as a whole. In this case, the subgroup selected

were players who used the lounge.

An attempt was made to survey the entire population, but as outlined earlier, this was not possible. Passing out the questionnaire at the casino entrance was impractical because individuals arriving at the casino were anxious to get right into the games (they did not want to be interrupted) while those on the way out had either lost a significant amount of money or may have had to go somewhere urgently. As a result, only those players using the lounge were willing to respond to the questionnaire because they were on a voluntary break.

A total of 184 players were asked to fill out the questionnaire; of those asked, 117 agreed. Consequently, the response rate was 64%. The main reason given for not cooperating with the study was that how much they bet or lost gambling was their own business and not something they wanted to divulge to strangers, even though they did not know the type of questions I would be asking.

In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were used to collect certain types of qualitative data (see the Interview Guide in Appendix B). This approach provided a framework within which I could develop questions, sequence these questions and make decisions about which information to pursue in greater depth (Patton, 1987). The flexibility permitted by the in-depth interview allowed me to pursue unanticipated topics and issues.

In-depth interviews were used to generate the "thick

description" of the findings. "Surveys become more meaningful when interpreted in light of critical qualitative information.... Triangulation, in this respect, can lead to a prominent role for qualitative evidence" (Jick, 1989, p. 142). The interviews were also used as a supplementary data source to garner information about regular players' lives outside the casino, which was difficult to discern from observation in the gambling setting or from questionnaire responses.

A life history interview was utilized in addition to the in-depth interview methodology for the purpose of enriching the data. Cultural anthropologists have long employed life history interviews as important sources of ethnographic data. Ostensibly, life histories are a focal point for an individual's perception of and response to broader cultural patterns (Agar, 1980). I felt that learning the life histories of regular gamblers was valuable in revealing relationships between gamblers, the gambling institution and the outside society--especially for gauging the impact of the outside society on the gambler.

A life history is an elaborate, connected piece of talk presented in a social situation consisting of an informant and an ethnographer (Agar, 1980). The life history presented here was derived from more sources than a "piece of talk" with the informant. I met an informant (Mr. M) at Casino ABS just after starting my preliminary observations. Because of our similar

backgrounds, (we both came from Mainland China), we soon established a rapport. Later my wife and I moved into the apartment building where Mr. M and his family lived. Before long our two families became very close and interacted frequently.[2] In fact, the two families spent two Christmas Eves together and took trips to Banff and Jasper. As a result of this fortuitous meeting, I was able to gather data on Mr. M, both from talks with Mr. M himself and with his wife. I gained knowledge of Mr. M's recent life history as we interacted on a regular basis for one-and-a-half years.

Sampling Procedures for the In-depth Interviews. To get an understanding of the gambling behavior of regular players, eight respondents were interviewed repeatedly over a two month period (June & July 1993); this approach corresponded to Humphreys' (1975) "intensive dozen" research strategy. It cannot be assumed that the eight regulars were representative of the casino population. I did, however, attempt to ensure the sample was balanced by age, gender, and ethnicity (two elderly, one female, three visible minorities) which approximated the target population.

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[2]The researcher explained to the informant his intention of doing a study about gambling behavior at the outset. Mr. M gave full consent to the idea.

Relationships between the Multimethods

Brewer and Hunter (1989) contended that triangulation requires multiple sets of data speaking to the same research question from different viewpoints. They further explained:

> The researcher infers validity from agreement between the data-sets, and invalidity from disagreement. To support these inferences, the data must be collected with truly different methods that are employed independently of one another but that are focused as tightly as possible upon the particular question being investigated. Otherwise, convergence (or agreement) may indicate instead a shared methodological bias, and divergence (or disagreement) may represent either an irrelevant, or a poorly focused comparison. (p. 83)

The reason for the independence of different research methods was to avoid the risk that the prior use of one method may have affected the next method's observations (Brewer and Hunter, 1989). For example, in this study the regular players being observed might have been influenced by their experience as survey participants and interviewees, or their responses to the questionnaire or interview questions might have been affected by their awareness of being observed in the field study which were all being conducted by the same investigator.

To collect data independently, Brewer and Hunter (1989) suggested that respondents be insulated from the effects of multiple waves of data collecting. Furthermore, they recommended four techniques to achieve insulation: (1) deception, (2) combining reactive and nonreactive methods, (3) proper sequencing of the methods, and (4) multiple or partitioned samples. Because the population for this case

study was too small to have partitioned samples and because a nonreactive method was not feasible in this study, deception was employed to conceal the fact that multiple measurements were being implemented. The sequencing of methods was organized to collect observational data first, and interview data afterward, in order to eliminate the effect of interviewing on respondents' subsequent behavior during the observation. To further conceal the multiple measurements strategy, the participant observation data gathering was not disclosed to the players.

Initially, survey questionnaires were to be distributed and collected by casino personnel, so respondents would not be aware of the multimethods being used to study them. Since this approach did not turn out as planned, I had to distribute the questionnaires myself. Consequently, interviews could have been contaminated by respondents' knowledge of the source of the questionnaire. To counter this possible interference, only those who had not completed a questionnaire were selected for an in-depth interview. It was assumed that survey respondents would not discuss their responses in the casino, so that the interviewees would not be unduly affected by the survey.

Researcher's Role Management

I maintained a peripheral membership role in the study by working as a dealer. In this role I acquired first-hand information on the casino regulars, their activities, and the

structure of their social world. I did not, however, assume a functional role in the group; for example, I did not become a regular player in the casino. A major reason for choosing a peripheral membership role instead of an active or complete membership role was financial consideration (being a player I would certainly have lost money), rather than epistemological beliefs. Another factor was that dealers were prohibited from gambling in the casino they worked for.

An advantage of having a peripheral membership role was the potential for establishing friendly relations with the casino staff and with management, which helped facilitate their cooperation in the research task. Similarly, I established friendly relationships with players, which made it easier to obtain candid interviews. The limitation of assuming this role, in comparison to the complete membership role, was that I could not rely on my own subjective experiences as a source of data, as suggested by Adler & Adler (1988).

One research strategy I employed was the "exchange approach" (Johnson, 1975); I offered favors and assistance to the players in exchange for research information in order to establish a reciprocal relationship with them. The favors and assistance offered were my knowledge about the games and playing strategies of Blackjack, as well as friendship. Secondly, the "individual-morality" approach was utilized to convince respondents of the researcher's integrity and the

nonthreatening nature of the research. Finally, I made use of my position as a dealer to develop friendships with the players to elicit their cooperation in the research.

Managing and Recording Data

Participant Observation

A layout with a diagram indicating the arrangements in the casino (game tables, security desk, lounge, and snack bar) was used to record the macro-perspective observations. Each player was marked on the layout in the corresponding position to the casino setting. Characteristics of the players such as gender, age (more than 60 years old or under), ethnicity, regular or non-regular, and the day of the week and time of the day when the observation occurred were also recorded. A copy of the layout was used for each observation. A total of twenty two observations were made.

For the micro-perspective observation, a regular player was followed unobtrusively by the researcher for two to three hours. All of the player's behaviors during the observation period were recorded in the form of field notes.

Survey

Potential survey respondents were approached in the casino lounge and asked to fill out a questionnaire on the spot. An envelope was provided to respondents who were requested to put the completed questionnaire in and seal it. I waited in the vicinity and collected the questionnaire

immediately after it was done. Although it was time-consuming to handle one respondent at a time, the trade-off was the increased likelihood of receiving a carefully completed questionnaire. It turned out that all the essential questions were answered by all 117 respondents. The only question not answered by a majority of respondents was the one requesting them to state what they liked and disliked about the casino. A possible reason for the satisfactory response rate was that respondents could ask the researcher for clarification if they were unclear about the intent of a particular question.

Completing the survey phase of the study proved rather cumbersome. The process was interrupted for almost a month when a new Games Manager objected to the contents of the questionnaire. She was worried that questions asking for personal information might upset the players. After a few rounds of renegotiation with the General Manager of the casino and two other Games Managers, the survey was allowed to continue with the questionnaire unchanged.

In-depth Interviews

The interviews were recorded mainly by taking notes in the lounge where casino players had their meals and drinks, watched TV, and took a break from intensive playing. Interview notes were taken as verbatim as possible; the interviews usually lasted longer than a single session, some as many as five sessions, each lasting twenty to thirty minutes.

Data Analysis Strategies

Participant Observation

Field notes taken during the participant observations were organized according to the coding categories suggested by Bogdan and Bilken (1982):

- Setting/context codes.
- Definition of the situation codes.
- Perspectives held by subjects.
- Subjects' ways of thinking about people and objects.
- Process codes (sequences of events, changes over time).

- Activity codes.
- Event codes (particular happenings).
- Strategy codes.
- Relationship and social structure codes.

The macro-perspective observations were ordered according to gender, ethnicity, age, and regular or non-regular participants. The percentage of each category was calculated based on the total of all twenty two observations (see Appendix C for summary).

Survey

The SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) was to be employed in analyzing the survey data. However, the researcher moved from the university during the data analysis phase of the study to a small city where there was no access to SPSS. For this reason, the researcher resorted to the relatively primitive and time-consuming method of doing the calculations by calculator. To ensure accuracy, all calculations were double checked (see Appendix D for original data.)

For the survey questionnaire findings, descriptive statistics were used to present the frequency and the central tendency of the scale results. The measured means for the independent variables were compared with the expected means, and the Chi-square statistic was used to determine whether differences were statistically significant.

In testing the hypotheses, the T-test was utilized to ascertain differences between regular and non-regular casino players with respect to the independent variables. The Chi-square test was utilized to determine the extent of differences between regulars and non-regulars with regard to the demographic variables. The Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine associations between dependent and independent variables. A one-tailed significance level was adopted for all of the significance tests because the direction of the relationships between the variables had already been hypothesized.

In-depth Interviews

Interview data were sorted and analyzed using the following coding categories derived directly from the theoretical framework and hypotheses, with special attention paid to the conflicts players may have had with the outside society.

1. Institutional arrangements codes

    a. institutional completeness
    b. encompassing tendency
    c. antagonistic relation

d. gambling subculture (values, beliefs, informal norms)

2. Social rewards codes

a. group affiliation
b. emotional support
c. moral support
d. self-esteem and personal achievement
e. social status

3. Stigmatization codes

4. Conflicts with outside society codes

a. life satisfaction
b. education and training
c. job and social advancement
d. outside social networks
e. value conflict

5. Commitment to gambling institution codes

a. involvement
b. emotional attachment
c. commitment

6. Problem gambling codes[3]

a. preoccupation with gambling
b. larger amounts of money wagered than intended
c. need to increase the size of bets
d. restlessness if unable to gamble
e. repeated efforts to cut down or stop gambling
f. failing to fulfil social, educational or occupational obligations because of gambling
g. giving up social, occupational or recreational activities in order to gamble
h. financial, social, occupational, or legal problems caused by gambling.

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[3]These codes are adopted from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual III of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 1980).

Ethical Issues

Conducting this case study posed some ethical concerns since casino gambling is still perceived by some as a stigmatized activity. As a result, any revelations about the participants could result in psychological harm. This is probably why casino regulars know each other by first names or nicknames only and why some players never reveal their names, even though they have played in the setting for years. Thus, survey and interview respondents were promised anonymity, and their responses treated confidentially.

The research design part of the proposal, including the questionnaire used in the survey, the interview guide, the informed consent form, and the signed letter of sponsorship, were submitted to the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation (University of Alberta) for a judgment on its ethical acceptability. The committee found it within acceptable standards subject to minor revisions to the informed consent form.

Respondents were not asked to sign the questionnaire or to leave any marks which might reveal their identities. I collected all the questionnaires, kept them in a secure place, and destroyed them after the data analysis was completed. Because of the casino's "sponsorship," I was asked to provide the casino management with player profiles, but not their questionnaires.

Fully informed and voluntary consent for participation

was obtained from the participants prior to conducting the interviews by means of a signed informed consent form.

The participant observation data collection was not revealed to the players because researcher anonymity was required for the insulation of multimethods, as discussed earlier. Secondly, the casino is a public place where anyone (with the exception of minors) has the right to observe others for any purpose. Thirdly, casino players are fully aware that they are under constant surveillance. Every table in the casino can be viewed by a hidden camera, the "sky eye," to scrutinize and videotape a player's every movement; "plain clothes" inspectors from the Gaming Control Branch could be present at any time; and pitbosses closely monitor the games and players in their area. Therefore, it was inferred that if players felt uncomfortable with this blanket supervision, they would not be in the setting in the first place. To be in such a fishbowl environment, they presumably did not mind being observed by one more person who had neither a discriminatory attitude toward them nor any intention of harming them. Finally, according to Hayano's long time participant observation experience, "gaining informed consent for research,... from such a transient population and announcing my intentions to observe and listen to talk for purposes of 'research' would have been futile as well as impractical" (Hayano, 1982, p. 157).

Respondents' real names were not used in the interview

notes or in the field notes. Instead each known player had a code name. The interview and field notes were transferred on to a computer disk within a day or two and stored in my disk case. The notes were shredded after being transferred to the computer. The disk storing the notes will be deleted upon completion of the study.

Any illegal acts observed or overheard were not reported in the research: first, because criminal activity was not the focus of the present study; and second, because reporting on illegal acts taking place in the casino would have contradicted and even jeopardized the individual-morality approach adopted to assure players of the nonthreatening nature of the research.

Chapter Five

RESULTS OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION IN THE CASINO MILIEU

Participant observation is the primary research method used in this study; it took place over a period of two and a half years. Information gained from early stages of the participant observation was utilized in developing the provisional theoretical model tested in the study. Findings from the latter part of the participant observation were employed in verifying and refining the proposed model.

The Setting

The Casino ABS Argyll was the locale observed for this study. It was one of three legal casinos that operated regularly in Edmonton. The venue was a single building located close to the southeastern edge of the city. There was a parking lot adjacent to the building which could accommodate about 150 vehicles. There were no bus stops within a kilometre of the casino building; as a result, the vast majority of players arrived by car or taxi. The parking lot was usually full during the busiest hours. To avoid the prospect of customers turning away because of insufficient parking space, the casino staff, except for managers, were required to park on nearby streets. Linked to the casino building was a small store owned by the same company (Alberta Bingo Supplies Ltd.) which sold gaming equipment and party decorations.

Flashing lights circling the CASINO ABS sign on top of the main entrance indicated the casino was open. In front of the building was a giant billboard with an eye-catching "WIN CASH!!!" in the middle. The sign also informed passers-by of the operating hours and days of the week when games were offered. Entry to the casino was free, but restricted to those 18 years of age and over. The casino was open 12 hours a day, from midday to midnight, six days a week, with the exception of a short Christmas break. There were no windows or clocks in the casino; as a result, there were no obvious indicators as to whether it is day or night, or whether it is sunny, cloudy, raining or snowing outside.

The Casino ABS Argyll building was spatially divided into three distinct areas: the playing area, the dining and resting area, and the administrative area. In the playing area, there were two oval-shaped territories called "pits" formed by the gaming tables. Players and staff not wearing uniforms were prohibited from entering the pits. "Pit one" consisted of 9 Blackjack tables, 3 Roulette tables, one Mini-baccarat table, and one Sic Bo table. Eight of the nine Blackjack tables in this pit were "high limit" tables. There were 2 non-smoking tables in the pit. On the opposite side of the playing area, "pit two" had 13 Blackjack tables, one Mini-Baccarat table, one RedDog table, and one Wheel of Fortune table. All Blackjack tables in this pit were "low limit" tables, and 4 tables were designated as non-smoking tables. Around the two

pits and against the walls, there were four video game machines, costing 25 or 50 cents to play. No monetary reward could be gained by playing these machines; consequently, they were rarely used by the casino patrons.

Players must bet between $2-50 if playing one hand at the high limit tables; and between $1-25 at the low limit tables. A maximum of seven players could play at each Blackjack, RedDog, or Mini-Baccarat table, but one player was allowed to play up to three hands or squares at the same time. According to house rules, one had to bet at least $10 in each square at the low limit tables or bet at least $20 in each square at the high limit tables if playing two hands. The stakes needed to play three hands at once were the table maximum bets in each square. More than ten players could play the Wheel of Fortune or Sic Bo simultaneously. The betting limits for the Wheel of Fortune were between $.25-5; and between $1-100 in Sic-Bo on Big-Small bets and $1-5 on any other bets; and for Mini-Baccarat between $5-100. The betting requirements for RedDog were the same as low limit Blackjack. The casino could hold a maximum of 210 players, but the average attendance at any given time was about 110 players.

The administrative area of the casino had two levels; on the ground level, there were washrooms, a snack bar, and a cashier cage where players cashed in their chips. The Games Manager's office, dealers' lounge, and the charitable organization lounge were located on the second level of the

administrative area, as were the surveillance cameras and replay units.

The dining and resting area was partitioned from the casino by glass walls. Here players could eat, drink, meet friends, watch TV on a big screen television set placed in one corner, and listen to piped-in music. A stereo system played background music all day long in the area. A small bar was situated in one corner; however, drinks must be consumed in this area as liquor was not allowed in the playing area. The TV set was tuned to The Sports Network almost all the time. Few players paid close attention to the programs on TV. There was a pool table close to the dining lounge that costed $1 a game. The pool table was dominated by the casino staff; no regular casino player was ever observed playing pool.

The snack bar, operated by a Korean family, served both Chinese and Canadian foods, a variety of soft drinks, and the favorite item of players and staff--coffee. Western-style food such as hamburgers could be served quickly, but one had to wait awhile to get Chinese meals such as fried rice and noodles. However, this ordering and waiting arrangement suited the players very well. They simply went back to the game after ordering their meal and told the cook when they needed it to be done. (There was an order book on the counter to list one's name, dish ordered, and the time the meal was to be ready). This was for the player's convenience so that time was not "wasted" between ordering and eating. A middle-aged Korean

lady pushed a tray loaded with soft drinks, junk food, and a coffee canteen around the playing area, allowing players to purchase drinks and snacks without leaving the game.

By the main entrance was a security desk where two uniformed guards were stationed. The guards checked the identification of newcomers suspected to be under 18 years of age and enforced social order in the casino, but only rarely were they called on to perform this duty. Most of their tasks fell under the category of mundane work such as going outside on occasion to enforce parking regulations. Besides warning people to move illegally parked vehicles, they reminded players to turn off their lights. Another duty of the security guards was selling lottery tickets and announcing the latest Lotto 6/49 results.

The Games

The games offered in the casino during the period of observation were Blackjack, Roulette, Mini-Baccarat, RedDog, Sic Bo, and Wheel of Fortune. All of these are player against the house games.

Players are at a disadvantage from the start in players versus the house games because the house takes a percentage of each bet, known as the "house edge." It is as if a player agreed to a game of coin tossing at $1 per throw. Each time the player guessed heads or tails correctly, the win is only $.95, but each losing bet is a full $1.00. The difference

between $1.00 and $.95 is the house edge.

The game of Blackjack is also called Twenty-One; the object is for players to achieve a higher card count than the dealer without going over 21. If a player goes over 21 (bust), his/her bet is lost. When the dealer and player have the same count, it is a tie or "push," and all bets are returned. Players have many choices in this game; you can ask for as many cards as you want before the hand busts; you can choose to stay on a hand, not drawing any cards; the original bet can be doubled if the first two cards add up to 10 or 11; a hand can be split if there is a pair on the first two cards. On a continuum ranging from all skill to all luck, Blackjack would lie somewhere in the middle. The house edge for this game ranges from 1% to more than 10%, depending on the skill of a particular player, with skilled players losing less in the long run and reckless players losing more.

Mini-Baccarat is a game where players wager on either the "player's" or "banker's" hand (like heads or tails on the toss of a coin). This game has a fixed house edge of 2.5%. The rules of the game had changed during the observation period so that one person can play all seven squares if betting $100 on each square. This was done in an attempt to attract "high rolling" customers.

RedDog is a game based on whether or not the middle card falls between two outside cards. Players win if the count of the middle card is between the counts of two outside cards.

Players can raise their bets; that is, they can double their original bets, before the dealer draws the middle card except when the first two cards are a pair. If the middle card has the same count as the pair, it is a "red dog" and players win eleven times their original bets. The house edge for RedDog is 4%-7%, depending on whether the player raises his or her bet at the proper time. The odds are better provided that players raise their bets only when there are seven or more cards that can fall between the outside cards.

The games of Roulette, Sic Bo, and Wheel of Fortune are played by betting on certain numbers expected to turn up. The house edges are unchangeable, 5.5%, 23%, and 20% respectively for Roulette, Sic Bo, and Wheel of Fortune. All of these are games of pure luck.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the Alberta Government in its Alberta Gaming Commission Annual Review (1990) reported that the overall takeout rate for casinos in the province was 21%. Blackjack was the most popular casino game in the house; more than 90% of the regular gamblers observed were Blackjack players who rarely played other games.

The Players

According to their participation frequency and degree of commitment to the gambling setting, players were categorized as recreationals, occasionals, regulars and problem gamblers.

A recreational player was a person who visited the casino

a few times a year and did so for relaxation, entertainment, and a little excitement. Visiting a casino may be one of many pastimes that take only a small part of the player's leisure time. Recreational players did not normally form lasting relationships with other gamblers. The gambling institution was an entertainment place that had no lasting impact on them. Recreationals were usually not fully cognizant of game rules and strategies. Participants in this category were in a state of flux; most attended the casino a few times and dropped out of the scene forever. The void they left was constantly filled by other recreationals. People from all walks of life are prone to being recreational players. The popular games among recreationals were Sic Bo, Wheel and Roulette because one can easily play these games without prior knowledge. Evenings, weekends, and holidays drew more recreational casino goers than other times and days. Recreationals represented only a small percentage of the participants in the casino at any given time.

Players in the occasional category visited the casino more often than recreationals, but less than three times a week. For them, as for recreational players, gambling was one of the sources of relaxation, entertainment, pleasure and excitement. Occasionals may have had other interests or hobbies, but gambling was a prominent leisure activity. Besides the excitement and "action," casino gambling played an important role in their social lives. Most occasionals had

established relationships with other gamblers and staff members. Their lives had been impacted to some degree by the gambling institution. They usually had a basic knowledge of most games and had a penchant for a particular game, usually Blackjack, Roulette or Mini-baccarat.

Occasionals were similar to the regulars, which means there was considerable two-way movement between the categories. When regulars could not sustain their casino attendance on a frequent basis due to changes in financial, familial, or social situations, they became occasional players. Similarly, due to changes in their lives such as the death of a spouse, retirement, and unemployment, occasionals came to the casino more often and became regulars. For instance, one player, a construction worker, shifted his status between occasional and regular many times. He turned into a regular player whenever his construction project was finished. Like the recreationals, the presence of the occasionals was more evident in the evenings and during weekends and holidays. The percentage of occasionals in the casino on average was between 20% to 25%.

Unlike recreationals and some of the occasionals, regulars were serious players who came to the casino at least three days a week; many played every operating day. To them, gambling provided more than relaxation, recreation, and a feeling of well-being. The regulars often developed personal relationships with other gamblers and the casino staff. Their

involvement in the gambling institution became an integral part of their lives. As a result, the social rewards derived from participating fully in the institution and its activities were an important stimulus for their continued participation. The regulars represented approximately 50% of the casino patrons on an average day, with a higher proportion present during "quiet" hours (between noon and 3 p.m.) and "quiet" days (mainly during inclement weather).

The socioeconomic backgrounds of regulars were likely to be working class or marginalized groups such as the unemployed, ethnic minorities, the disabled, the retired or the poorly educated. Most regulars had a sound knowledge of and unshakeable beliefs about the games, especially their preferred game--Blackjack. This group was the major source of income for the casino. According to the casino manager, an average regular player contributed about $19,500 a year to the casino.

Problem gamblers spent almost every waking moment engaging in or thinking about gambling. Gambling was also a fervid interest of regular players, sometimes rivalling their family or job commitments. A key distinction between regular and problem gamblers was that their time spent gambling was less likely to impinge negatively on family or vocational responsibilities for regulars. Gambling was the central focus of problem gamblers to the extent that it disrupted or compromised their day-to-day obligations. Problem gamblers may

once have been regular players, but, for whatever reason, they had lost control to the point where they could not adhere to preset time or spending limits. As a result of playing longer and wagering higher amounts, the problem gambler almost always loses, which in turn exacerbates the problems caused by this total commitment (Smith, Volberg, & Wynne, 1994).

Based on their playing strategies and beliefs, players could be subdivided into three categories: normative players, card-counters, and non-conformist players. The vast majority of regulars and occasionals were normative players; that is, they played according to shared beliefs and informal norms. For example, they had informal rules about entering an ongoing game, playing strategy, and the proper attitude one should have toward the game and other players. Normatives comprised the mainstream of the gambling subculture. Their beliefs and informal norms were the cornerstones in the formation and structure of the gambling subculture.

Card-counters are players who try to memorize the cards (the number of high and low cards left in the shoe) and then change their "betting strategies" according to their counts. When the remaining cards are favorable to the player, wagers are increased accordingly. The skillful application of card-counting is believed to produce a slight statistical edge for the player over the house (Thorp, 1962; Wong, 1980). Card-counters have difficulty "beating the dealer" in Alberta casinos because the playing rules set by the provincial

government are not as player-friendly as they are in many other parts of the world. In the ABS casino, most of the players in the card-counting group were believers instead of actual card counters. If there was a known card-counter at the table, other players sought the advice of the counter. These card-counting believers usually played like normative players when not playing with a card-counter.

One type of non-conformist player was the recreationals. They fit this category because they lacked knowledge of the games and the informal norms followed by most casino players. Therefore, they inadvertently violated the informal rules of playing. Other non-conformists were players who did not fully accept the informal playing rules and played according to their superstitious beliefs or "gut feelings." For example, they may "stay short" (stay on a low count hand against dealer's upcard of six and under--stiff card), "guess cards" (stay short if predicting the next card will be a high count card; or hit a high count card if predicting the next card will be a low count card).

Demographic Profiles of Casino Gamblers

Casino patrons were overrepresented by working class individuals and ethnic minorities (Asians, Arabs, Italians, Ukrainians, Blacks, and Native Indians), which is congruent with the observations of Campbell and Ponting (1984). According to my systematic observations, 48% of the ABS Argyll

casino participants were ethnic minorities, 16% were female, and 32% of the players were the elderly. More than 90% of the casino goers observed were smokers. Welfare recipients and physically disabled individuals were also overrepresented in the casino; the basis of this finding were my observations and my conversations with players and casino staff. According to police officials and casino executives, some of the regulars were also known or suspected criminals.

The Patterns of Casino Gambling Participation

The participation rate of the various types of players differed according to the season and time of the day. These patterns of involvement reflected the organization of life and activities in the gambling institution and the outside world.

The casino door opened at 11:40 a.m., and the games started at noon. Casino staff made use of this twenty minute interval to sign in, get to their work locations, clean the tables and organize the cards. In this twenty minute period, about 20 to 25 players, mostly regulars, arrived and waited in the lounge. Some had breakfast or brunch at this time. This waiting period provided a socializing opportunity. They chatted in groups of four or five while drinking a cup of coffee; the regulars seldom drank liquor. Another practical purpose of this social gathering was to form playing groups and card-counting teams. The playing groups were formed principally by normative players who trusted one another's

"playing skills." The card-counting teams usually comprised one or two card-counters and several card-counting believers. Each team consisted of four to seven players, depending on how many played two or three hands at once. The goal of team forming was to "fill" the Blackjack table, that is, occupy all the squares so that the non-conformist or untrustworthy players could not "jump in" and "screw up the cards."

The period between noon and 3:00 p.m. was slow. Being aware of this phenomenon, casino managers did not open some tables until 1:00 p.m. or 2:00 p.m. The non-smoking tables were usually last to be opened. Attendance picked up between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. The majority of players arriving during this period were regulars and occasionals. The hour between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. was a tapering period where players had supper; night shift workers went to their jobs; and heavy losers used "going home to have dinner" as an excuse to leave the game. The casino filled up again after 7:00 p.m. and stayed busy until midnight. More recreational players came to the casino in this time period. The flow of recreationals fluctuated as they tended not to stay in action for long. Regulars usually stayed in the casino longer than either recreationals or occasionals. Most of the regulars who came before noon stayed in action until the casino closed. Some groups and teams remained intact until their tables were closed.

Casino attendance ebbed and flowed not only during a

twelve-hour cycle, but also by week and month of the year. Individual participation was affected by the occurrence of outside events and the financial wherewithal of the players. Generally, weekends were busiest because there were more recreationals and occasionals in the casino; Wednesdays and Thursdays were the least crowded days. The first and third weeks of the month were busy weeks because this was when many players got their bi-monthly pay or welfare cheques. The days after payday were the busiest in the month. Players tended to wager more and dealer tips increased. As might be expected, the casino generated higher profits on these busier days. Casino attendance also increased on national holidays to the point where the building was congested with players waiting to get a square. During the year, participation dropped off after the Christmas break and picked up in February until the end of June. Casino crowds reached their nadir in August after the biggest gambling event of the year, the Klondike Days Casino, which took place during the summer fair in July and featured higher betting limits. The weeks before Christmas were the busiest of the year.

Another observable participation pattern in the casino pertained to the play of various racial and ethnic groups. Unlike the wider Canadian society where multiculturalism is promoted and practised, the casino was a melting pot where players, no matter what their ethnicity, formed a subculture which held shared beliefs. As a result, regular ethnic

minority gamblers interacted with others in the casino and communicated in English, no matter what their language of origin.

The prominent ethnic minorities in the casino included Chinese, Indo-chinese (Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians), Koreans, Filipinos, Eastern Indians, Arabs, Italians, Ukrainians, Blacks, and Native Indians. Taken in total, visible minorities comprised a higher percentage of the regulars. They were more likely to be normative players and played for higher stakes than their Canadian born and raised counterparts.

Chinese and other Oriental nationalities represented approximately 15-20% of the casino participants. Most were regulars or occasionals, and they tended to play for much higher stakes than did other ethnic minorities. The Koreans were unique among the Oriental groups; most were solitary players who did not interact within a group or with other groups. They were among the heaviest gamblers in the casino. As a consequence, most could not sustain their regular status for very long. They often disappeared from the scene indefinitely after several heavy losses.

Native Indians were mostly occasional players who, by and large, conformed to normative playing strategies and mingled less with other ethnic groups and with the casino staff.

The Gambling Institution

Viewing a gambling establishment as an institution engendered a different understanding of gamblers and their setting than treating it as a gambling scene or simply as a place to gamble. My contention was that the casino has characteristics that are similar to other institutions, and treating it in this fashion helps to understand the reliance of gamblers on the casino and the impact of the casino on the players.

The casino under study resembled Goffman's (1961) notion of the total institution for regular gamblers. Characteristics of the casino that were similar to a total institution included institutional completeness, encompassing tendency, antagonistic relationship, and gambling subculture.

Institutional Completeness

Institutional completeness is an important feature of casinos that attracts regular gamblers. The casino as total institution is a place where players can eat, play video games or pool, watch television, listen to music, meet friends, make telephone calls, find drinking buddies and sexual companions, make outside gambling bets, and play the casino games. As a result, some regulars' basic needs are satisfied here. For instance, one player exclaimed, after learning the casino was going to serve liquor, "Wow, guys can stay here all day. They've got everything here!" Many regulars did spend all day, from the moment the door was opened until the last hand was

dealt at midnight, eating their meals and doing everything else in the casino.

The gambling institution was also a place of work and leisure for the regulars. For some players gambling was like a job; this attitude was reflected in the following comments.

> Playing cards is hard work.
>
> I'm up, but I worked very hard to make this money.
>
> I've made twenty dollars in ten hours. So I'm making two bucks an hour. It's not a very good job, but it's better than making nothing.
>
> I just lost my job, so I figured maybe I could make some money here instead of making nothing by staying at home.
> I've made a couple of hundred bucks here last week. I've been laid off. So I guess this is not a bad job to make some money. (Field notes)

As for leisure, the tingle of excitement caused by the uncertainty of gambling was satisfying enough to meet regular players' entertainment needs. No gambling situation is ever quite the same; each new Blackjack hand brings a different combination of variables and renewed optimism, thus making the game alluring and stimulating for the regular players. Many regulars played hours in a row without leaving the tables. When the urge to use the washroom finally became unbearable, these regulars ran to the washroom during the shuffling time and rushed back to be dealt in for the new shoe. The fun of playing was so irresistible that they did not want to miss a single hand.

Encompassing Tendency

The encompassing tendency of a gambling institution is more apparent than in most other institutions, simply because gambling is more time-consuming, more fascinating, and its world more complete. One consequence of gambling's encompassing tendency is to separate its participants from the outside world. As a result, regular gamblers found it hard to leave the institution, both daily and permanently, because their isolation from the outside world produced strong feelings of group identification. For many regular gamblers, participation in the activities of the gambling institution became their daily reason for being. Disengagement from the institution was discomforting and anxiety-producing for these regulars. I observed regulars who chose to stay in the casino even after losing all their money. They remained to watch others play, give advice to friends or borrow money here and there to get back in action.

Antagonistic Relationship

An adversarial relationship exists between gamblers and the house. The house is represented by the charitable organizations who sponsor the casino and the casino staff including dealers, pitbosses, pit supervisors, and casino managers.

Players were usually unfriendly to the staff while playing against them and saw them as mean, greedy, and untrustworthy. They did not hesitate to use profane or

derogatory language to hurt the dealer's feelings or to relieve their own frustrations. They called dealers names like "cheater," "killer," "murderer," "son of gun," "wolf," "bitch," "terminator," "robber," "shark," "vacuum machine," "robot." Because of their hostile attitude toward the house, players attributed any disruption in their routine as a plot against them. For example, complaints were heard when the scheduled dealer came over to replace a dealer who was on a losing streak: "Gee, we've just started winning, then they send this guy here to take their money back. They can't stand seeing us win, uh!" Any change in house rules, whether or not it affected the odds, was met by criticism and dissatisfaction. Players viewed these changes as a device to "take more of their money." Sometimes players accused dealers of cheating when they hit a lucky streak: "You guys must be cheating! How can anyone draw 21 first hand out of the shoe. No one can be that lucky."

Likewise, the house did not trust the players. All possible precautions were taken to prevent players from cheating; for instance, all the cards were checked every day to avoid using marked cards. The main task of the pitbosses was to spot suspicious players and prevent cheating schemes from being carried out. Though not formally stated, the house aim was to relieve players of their money as fast as possible. Charity group volunteers often told the dealers: "Come on, take all their money for us;" "go get them. We want to make

a lot of money." "We'd like to see them lose heavy and fast." Casino managers pressured the dealers to do what was necessary (but ineffective in reality) to stop players from winning. These tactics included: shuffling differently, putting the cutting card in different places, speeding up or slowing down play.

> One day when I stepped into the dealers lounge during my break, the casino manager asked me and several other dealers, "Do you know the gaming control board changed the rules, now you can cut 35 to 108 cards at high limit tables?" "Is it because of those card counters?" I asked. "Yeah," he confirmed, "table 3 has been winning since February 20th." (Table 3 was occupied by a group of card counters led by Ukrainian, R.) Another dealer said, "R. cried about the cutting." The manager said, "R. doesn't run the casino. I do. I don't care what R. says. He takes advantage of the rules. He controls more squares than allowed." (R. gives advice to other players at the table regarding how to play.) The dealer said again, "R. and those card counters can do a lot of advertising for the house though." The manager did not comment on that, but a moment later said scornfully, "They are a bunch of the worst card counters in the world 'cause they always end up having different counts." (Field notes)

This antagonistic relationship between gamblers and the house was perpetuated by the formal and unwritten rules of the house. All dealers were uniformed (black bow tie, white shirt, black tuxedo pants, and a name tag with photo and registration number on it) in order to distinguish staff from players. Personal interaction between gamblers and staff was discouraged. For instance, handshaking between a gambler and a uniformed dealer was forbidden in the casino. Dealers and pitbosses on a break were required to relax either in the

dealer's lounge or at designated restaurant tables marked "Staff Only." Players were not allowed to sit with the staff. Members of charitable groups working as chip-runners or cashiers also had their own lounge and designated tables. According to house rules, staff could not play in the same casino where he or she was working. Anyone disobeying this rule faced immediate dismissal. These rules served to minimize staff-player interaction.

Identification Practices

Because of the contentious nature of casino games, antagonism is difficult to avoid or eliminate. However, tension caused by these oppositonal roles can be alleviated through a set of identification practices initiated by the house.

These practices were aimed at getting gamblers to identify with the house. Examples included Christmas, and holiday celebrations, greetings and birthday announcements. Every year prior to Christmas, the casino was festooned with Christmas lights, a big decorated Christmas tree, ornaments, and stockings. Players were given candy, chocolate, and other snacks by the house. Similarly, pumpkin faces were displayed in the casino during "Hallowe'en week." The casino management also designated one week as "Hawaii Week" when staff wore flowered shirts and shorts; one week was "Rodeo Week" where the staff wore cowboy outfits. Many regulars were greeted with a "hi" and a smile by the staff (demanded by the casino

management). Sometimes a player's or a dealer's birthday was announced on the loud speaker. These practices were designed to create a congenial atmosphere and make players "feel at home." The feeling of being taken care of and belonging to a "big family" helped bind players to the gambling institution.

A monthly magazine entitled Bingo News & Gaming Hi-lites was distributed in the casino and was another form of identification practice. In one section of the magazine, brief letters to the editor were published. The contents included winnings in a particular game, complaints about inconsiderate employees or annoying players, and praise for helpful employees. Some articles explained the rules of games, especially new games and new rules. The purpose of these articles was to reduce "the newcomer's fear of looking foolish or making mistakes." This publication may have assisted in reducing the social distance between the staff and players.

Another casino-engineered identification practice was to encourage dealers to show sympathy for the players. Dealers were told to say "good luck" or "better luck" to the players when they left the gaming table. A typical conversation between a dealer and a player was as follows:

> Staff: Hi, John! How are you doing today?
> Player: Terrible! I'm one hundred down today.
> Staff: Well, you still got plenty of time ahead. I hope you get your money back.
> Player: Thanks.

> S. complained about having lost $80,000 in the casino when I was dealing to him. He said, "This place should be closed." After a hand he said, "You people should do something about the odds. We can't

> win here." The pitboss standing by my side called another pitboss over and they both said, "Hey S., we haven't seen you for a while. We missed you, S., we'd like to see you more often. We enjoy having you around." They all laughed, including two other players at the table. S. didn't laugh but stopped complaining. (Field notes)

Through the practice of sympathetically identifying with the player's situation, the staff and gamblers got a more favorable perception of one another. In sum, all these identification practices "express unity, solidarity, and joint commitment to the institution rather than differences between the two levels" (Goffman, 1961, p. 94).

The Gambling Subculture

Regular gamblers formed their own subculture in the casino on the basis of their different language, values, beliefs, and social norms from the wider society. In every culture there are general conceptions of the desirable goals that people should strive to attain, and criteria by which their actions can be evaluated. These general conceptions are the values of that culture. The key values of the casino subculture were "beating the system" and "cooperation." "Beating the system" meant that players wanted to outsmart and defeat the house by making money in the casino games. The reason "cooperation" was valued by players was that they thought it was the best way to beat the system. Players were often heard saying, "If the whole table works together, we can beat the dealer." The value of "beating the system" is akin

to Rokeach's (1974) "terminal values," which are the desirable goals or ends that people should strive to attain; and the value of "cooperation" is one of Rokeach's "instrumental values," which are the criteria by which actions should be evaluated.

While a value concerns what a person regards as good or desirable, a belief is a statement of what he/she regards as true and factual. A belief may be based on empirical observation, logic, tradition, acceptance by others, or faith. The players in the casino subculture believed in the "flow of the cards," the idea that cards were dealt in certain patterns or rhythms. A "good" pattern occurred when the majority of players were winning; the best scenario was when the dealer frequently exceeded 21. Conversely, a "bad" pattern was formed when the dealer was constantly winning, particularly by getting Blackjack, or by making uncanny hits to get 21. Maintaining the good pattern and changing the bad pattern was the primary focus of the players' informal norms in the casino subculture.

Social precepts that provide guidelines for appropriate behaviors can be divided into formal and informal norms. The formal norms in the casino were the house rules. These norms were enforced by gaming staff and security personnel. A violation of the house rules could result in expulsion from the casino. Informal norms were an important part of the gambling subculture and generally enforced by regular players.

Table 5.1

Basic Strategy and Deviations

	Dealer's Card									
You Have	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
17	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
16	S	S	S	S	S	S*	S*	S*	S*	S*
15	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H	H	H
14	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H	H	H
13	S	S	S	S	S	H	H	H	H	H
12	S*	S*	S	S	S	H	H	H	H	H
7, A	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S*	S*	S*
11	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D*
10	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D*	D*
A, A	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
10, 10	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
9, 9	S*	S*	S*	S*	S*	S	S*	S*	S	S
8, 8	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP	SP
7, 7	S*	S*	S*	S*	S*	H*	H	H	H	H
6, 6	S*	S*	S*	S*	S*	S	S	S	S	S
5, 5	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D*	D*
4, 4	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H	H
3, 3	H	H	H*	H*	H*	H*	H	H	H	H
2, 2	H	H	H*	H*	H*	H*	H	H	H	H

Note. S = Stand; H = Hit; D = Double; SP = Split.
* The playing is deviant from the method suggested by Blackjack experts (Thorp, 1962; Wong, 1980).

Most informal norms dealt with maintaining a "good" pattern of the cards. To understand the informal norms regarding how to play "correctly"--which was to maintain the pattern--it is necessary to understand "basic playing strategy," as shown in Table 5.1. Although many players deviated from the basic strategy suggested by card experts, the normative players believed their playing methods were the

best way to maintain a good pattern. They trusted their own instincts and experience more than the books. They claimed, "Those casino book writers work for casinos; they get paid by casinos. Don't ever trust those books."

Conforming to basic strategy was believed to harmonize with maintaining a good pattern of the cards, whereas any departure from basic strategy was seen by regulars as "screwing up" or "messing up the cards." Therefore, adhering to the basics became a predominant informal norm. "Staying short" (meaning to stand when you are supposed to hit), "hitting against a stiff" (low cards), and "splitting too much" were cardinal sins in the casino subculture. A typical player reaction to a breach of an informal norm was "the dealer always gets 21 when people split ten's." Not doubling down when you are supposed to also drew a reprimand. If one did not want to risk money by doubling bets, the player was requested to "play as a double," that is, ask for only one card no matter what that card is in order to not disturb the pattern of the cards. In sum, regulars believed that any deviation from the basics could turn a favorable shoe into an unfavorable shoe for the players.

To maintain the pattern of the cards, players were requested to remain at the table from the beginning to the end of a shoe. "Jumping in and out" or "one hand in and out" was considered to be disturbing the pattern of the cards and, thus, violating the informal norms of the casino subculture.

"Jumping in and out" refers to a player's joining or leaving the game in the middle of a shoe after only having played a few hands. "One hand in and out" is a situation where a player plays one more square after having played a few hands in the same shoe, or vice versa. Players who jumped in and out at different tables were said to be "working for the house." The regulars' perception was that "these people are hired and paid by the house to screw up every table so the house can make more money." However, it depended on the situation. A player coming into the middle of a deal may be asked by regulars to "wait till end of the shoe" if "the cards are going good," or to "jump in" if "the cards are running bad" in the hope of changing the pattern. Some players even deviated from optimal playing strategy in an attempt to change "the way the cards are coming out." Normally, this radical move was made only after consulting other regulars at the table.

These informal norms were mainly for Blackjack players, but they could be "contagious." RedDog players were also encouraged not to jump in the middle of a shoe because regulars believed jumping in changed the cards, even though they could not draw more cards as Blackjack players can.

Cutting cards correctly was another informal norm in the casino subculture. Anyone who cut a "winning shoe" for the table was requested to cut the next shoe so as to continue the favorable pattern. The player who cut a "losing shoe" was expected to give the privilege of cutting cards to another

player at the table. Other rules regarding cutting cards included: "Cut in the same spot if winning;" "cut in different spots when losing;" and "don't cut in the middle." Cutting cards was deemed so important that many players thought it determined the pattern of the shoe. If they believed the pattern of the shoe was unfavorable because of a "bad cut," players changed their tactics slightly, for example, staying short once or playing one more hand. Under the circumstances, a slight deviation from the "basics" was acceptable, but the player had to inform others at the table of his/her intention to change the pattern and get consent from the others.

Of course, not all players were willing to cooperate, but if not, they could expect sanctions from the majority who espoused this value. Sanctions took the form of blaming the offender for their own loss: "Hey, you made us lose by staying on that hand." Or they belittled the offender with comments such as, "Let him play by himself; he won't have any friends here the way he plays." Generally, these rebukes and threat of ostracism effectively kept most players in line. These player comments illustrate how group norms constrain and shape regular gamblers' behavior in a casino setting. Although the practice of maintaining a good pattern and changing a bad pattern did not improve their chances of winning according to probability theory, it did, however, make sense to the casino regulars.

While casino regulars may be influenced to adopt faulty

playing strategies, the gambling scene did offer the following offsetting rewards to its members.

Group Affiliation

Casino gambling takes place in a group setting and gamblers seek out associations with other gamblers. Physical isolation is an aversive experience, causing psychological suffering. Unfortunately, the technological development of modern society facilitates rather than reduces the isolation between people (Schachter, 1959). The casino provided an ideal opportunity for participants to form groups and interact with one another. Therefore, group affiliation was seen as a likely social reward for casino regulars.

> Lady J., in her sixties, played at my table. It seems she always complains about losing. Once she sat down at the table she started complaining again. She mumbled about losing $100. She announced again, "I'm not going to come here anymore. This is the last time. I'm not going to lose any more of my money. I've already lost thousands of dollars to this place. It's insane. It's stupid to keep coming back here." I said to her, "You always say that, but you always come back. Why?" "Oh, well," she paused for a brief moment, "I like the people here. They are nice people. I guess I really like the people here." (Field notes)

Casino regulars depended on one another because they perceived themselves competing against their common enemy, the house. The following statements demonstrate this belief in action: "We shouldn't play against each other. We are here playing against the dealer." "I play for the table, not for myself. Therefore, I don't want to take a card that will help the dealer." These statements show how players developed a

feeling of unity and belonging. Moreover, because the value of cooperating to beat the system was so strong, a "fate interdependence" was fostered among players which generated group affiliation and cohesion.

Player bonding was obvious in Blackjack because it was a group activity for most regulars. Most regulars did not want to play "one on one" with the dealer because they believed "players working together" was the best way to attain their superordinate goal--beating the system. A lone player usually waited for other players before opening a table. Likewise, when one player ended up being left alone at a table, more often than not he/she would leave and join another table. Some regulars would only play at a "full table" because they thought they had a "better chance" when more people were cooperating to overcome the dealer. Blackjack was popular because it is a game where some skill can be applied, and it is a game where players can cooperate to achieve a shared goal.

Emotional and Moral Support

Technically, the gambling subculture is a "world of losers," because the vast majority, if not all, will lose money in the long run. This is a situation that normally causes anxiety and depression for most people unless they delude themselves about the odds they face or the skills they possess. Bonding with other regulars can help cushion the blow of losing money. This works in two ways: first, it can reduce

anxiety since the presence of like-minded peers may provide comfort, consolation, and reassurance; second, seeing how others handle a similar circumstance provides information on how to aptly interpret one's emotions and feelings. Money lost can be rationalized as an entertainment fee for the pleasurable sensations players get in the casino. If the loss is substantial, players can be comforted by sympathetic friends who remind them their luck is sure to improve.

A: Gee whiz! How can I win?! I got 20, the dealer got 21; I got 21, the dealer got blackjack.
B: Yeah, the dealer at another table was exactly the same. That's why I moved to this table.

A: Everybody was losing at that table. That guy there was incredible, standing on 14 against dealer's face and hitting stiffs.
B: I know what you're saying. How can you win playing with such a person?

A: How are you doing?
B: No good. I'm down.
A: I lost two hundred bucks in one shoe! Oh, the cards were so bad.
B: I was up though. But I'm down one hundred now. One good shoe I'll get it back. Com'on dealer, give us a good shoe.
A: Good luck. (Field notes)

Moreover, being with others who do not disapprove of one another's presence in a quasi-stigmatized environment is an added attraction of the casino. Instead of looking upon each other as degenerates, many regulars perceived themselves as intellectually and morally superior to the recreationals who did not follow the informal rules of the gambling subculture. Regulars regarded recreationals who were "messing up the cards" as "impolite," "rude," "inconsiderate," "selfish,"

"stupid," and so on. The typical view shared by most regulars about the non-conformist recreational players was reflected in the following statement:

> Wrecking the shoe like that these people don't have respect for other people's money. All they think about is themselves. I respect other people's money 'cause I know they earn their money as hard as I do and hate losing it as much as I do. So I've never jumped in at a winning table. (Field notes)

Self-Esteem

Participation in a gambling activity can help boost self-esteem because gamblers are often with others in a group-setting and are constantly evaluating one another's performance according to their subcultural values, beliefs, and norms. In the casino subculture, players who cooperated to maintain the "appropriate" pattern of the cards were granted higher esteem and respect by fellow players. Praise was directed to those who conformed to the informal norms: "nice play," "good stay," "smart hit," "superb split." "Joe is a good player. He always plays consistently." Some players overtly sought recognition: "Hey, if I didn't hit that 15, the dealer would have got 21. I saved you guys." "Ya, thank you for saving us. Good play," the others usually responded.

Another possible source of self-esteem in the gambling institution was the development of a sense of personal achievement, a feeling that may well be denied in other spheres of the regular gambler's life. The casino provided an environment for gamblers to display their skill, knowledge,

and bravado (Thompson, 1991). For example, some casino regulars mastered the "basic strategy" of play. This means knowing the odds of hitting their hand based on the dealer's up-card. They also learned how to adjust their bets based on intuition and card counting, the rules of the games, the rules of the house, and various money management techniques. These tricks of the trade were exhibited in a regular casino gambler's explanation to a novice on how to play Blackjack:

> You hit until 16 against dealer's big cards, and you stay on 12 and up against dealer's small cards. But there are many variations. You have to look at the cards on the table and the way cards are coming out. It's too complicated for you to understand them now. It takes years to know all these things. You just ask us experienced players when you are not sure what to do. (Field notes)

The casino gambling environment is especially seductive to working class people because gambling does not require a specialized education or social position to fit in. As long as one is willing to conform to the informal norms of the subculture, acceptance will be granted by the regulars. The norms of the gambling subculture are simplistic and straightforward enough that anyone can learn them in a short time. However, conforming to the informal norms on a consistent basis is not so easy. The trade-offs are considerable; adhering to the norms means giving up self-reliance, self-determination, and independence in order to have your self-esteem enhanced. Nevertheless, most normative players were willing to sacrifice self-determination for

esteem. Many normative players consulted regulars for advice about playing their hands. They did this primarily to avoid criticism, but also to get a better sense of the proper strategy. To do this required "selflessness," as many players declared, "I don't play for myself. I play for the table."

Social Status

Inside the casino, a person's status was determined by the casino regulars' own special informal rules. These included: conformity to the informal norms, loyalty to the group (cooperation), length of experience, and the average stake wagered. Thus, "a partial reversal on the inside of external status" (Goffman, 1961, p. 120) was possible; that is, a person with low status in society could have high status in the casino.

Conforming to the informal norms was conducive to achieving a higher status in the gambling institution. For example, the "anchor" (last hand on the table) position in Blackjack was usually taken by a normative player who did not "play funny" or "play stupid." Players would pressure an "inexperienced" player or non-conformist player to give up the anchor spot to a player with a "good reputation." The anchor player was presumed to influence the outcome of the dealer's hand and, thus, affect whether players at the table won or lost. Therefore, the player in this position was deemed important and, in the eyes of the regulars, had a higher status.

On the other hand, not complying with informal norms resulted in a lower social status. For instance, those violating informal norms were subject to sanctions ranging from verbal rebukes to shunning. Examples of typical put-downs were: "Let him play by himself; what a jerk," "this guy splits 10's, no wonder we're losing here;" and "you stupid, stay on 14, 15 all the time to make all of us lose."

> A young player (not a regular) came to my table. He stayed a few hands short. A player mumbled with a very strong, indignant tone, "Wow, nice play! Stay on 14 against a face card. No wonder we're losing here." The youngster retorted angrily, "I play my hand, you play yours, OK! Some people always pick on others for their losing. It's disgusting." After having played another few hands, the youngster said, "Oh, too much hostility here. I can't concentrate on playing." Then he picked up his chips and left. (Field notes)

> F. came to my table and played the anchor square as he usually does. He split two faces while betting two dollars. "Hey, don't do that! We're playing bigger money here. I've lost five hundred dollars already," a player protested angrily. "I've lost fifteen thousand in the last three days. I want to get my money back," F. said more angrily. F. kept playing like this; but the other players did not object. (Perhaps losing big money can buy people status and power here. The more money lost, the more power one has.) (Field notes)

> A non-regular complained to me, "Geez, that guy is something," referring to the dealer preceding me, "He beat the shit out of me and he's smiling." A pitboss heard this and called a security guard to quiet the player.
>
> One day a regular called me "a son of a bitch." I looked up at a pitboss standing by my side and waited for him to show some justice. But he said to the player, "Hey N., don't worry. He will be leaving soon." (It seems that regular participation in the casino can sometimes give one the right to complain and swear.) (Field notes)

The need for social status and the possibility of achieving it in a casino were obvious in this instance:

> A Chinese couple surprised me today. They are regulars in the casino, in their forties. From the clothes they wear, the broken English they speak, and their manners, I would guess they belong to the working class. They are very close fisted as far as tipping is concerned. But today they were virtually giving their money away, lots of money. They asked each of the four players at the table to play a square with $50 bets for them. If they won that hand, they got $5 bonus from the couple. If that was a double-down or split, the bonus was doubled as well. And these players didn't have to risk a cent of their own money to make a profit. What a deal! Are the Chinese couple insane, so that they really didn't know what they were doing? (I think they were using their money to achieve something else. They were calling the shots. They were the bosses and all others were in their service. The hand-outs earned status for the couple.) (Field notes)

An Escape from Outside Society

The casino provided an alternative reality for regular gamblers. A heavy gambling involvement may erode a regular gambler's business connections, friendships, and interaction with significant others, mainly because of the long hours spent gambling. As a result, regular gamblers came to rely on casino friendships for social and emotional support, which further removed them from outside society. For example, when a regular came to the casino, for a visit and not to play the games, he was asked, "Why come here now that you are not playing?" "I come here to visit my friends. I've got all my friends here," he replied.

The hours spent gambling dissipated time that could be

used for educational or job advancement. As a consequence, many casino regulars were unemployed or repeatedly in and out of jobs. "Why don't you get a job? Then you won't be broke so often," they were asked. A typical reaction was: "How can I get a job when I'm here all the time."

> Lady L. (about 70 years of age) brought her grand-daughter to the casino. They played at my table. Lady L. was very cheerful and talkative. She introduced her grand-daughter around. "This is Grant. He is a nice dealer. He always gives money. Grant, this is my grand-daughter J. I'm going to show her how to play this game. This is her first time here." "Hi Bob. This is Bob and this is my grand-daughter J. Bob is a pitboss." Lady L. also introduced J. to her other acquaintances at the table and to those at adjacent tables. She also waved to greet other acquaintances at distant tables. J. exclaimed, "We've always wondered what granny is doing here all the time. Now I know why. You are so sociable and popular here." During their play Lady L. taught J. how to play "basics," such as when to hit, when to stay, and when to double or split. But she added that 12 against dealer's 2 or 3 was more complicated, that as a beginner you just stayed, but a more experienced player may draw a card or stay according to the upcards on the table. J. seemed impressed by the skills and wisdom demanded to succeed in the games.
>
> On another occasion, lady L. told me she was widowed. Her husband used to oppose her visits to the casino. Now she comes here more often than she used to. (Field notes)

> I talked to Ma today. During our conversation, I have learned that her son J. (a regular at the casino) was unemployed, had no outside income, and was living with her. I asked why he didn't look for a job. She said it was hard to find a job these days. She also said that her other son (who is not a gambler) had no problem finding a job although he was out of a job now and then; however, her gambler son had a hard time finding a job. (Field notes)

> Yesterday I talked to a dealer. She was very sick at the time, with a runny nose and coughing a lot. I said she should go home and take a rest; this way she would recover faster. She told me that she

> couldn't because she had a big family to support. I asked whether she had a husband and why he did not support the family. She told me she kicked her husband out of the house because he was gambling too much. She said her husband had had a supervisory job in a factory with a decent salary. But he gambled a lot, including the casino and Sports Select. Because of his gambling habit, he had no money left for the family. Besides, he got demoted at work because he did not put enough effort into his job since he started gambling heavily.
>
> She was a Vietnamese, having immigrated to Canada not long ago, having four children. One child had already got married and moved out. (Field notes)

Sometimes regular gamblers concealed their gambling adventures from their family or friends to avoid the effects of stigmatization and conflicts with the outside society.

> A regular player told others at the table that he never told his wife about his gambling in the casino, and that his wife always wondered and asked him, "How come you don't have any money left even though you have a job? Where the hell has all the money gone?" One day this player took his wife to the exhibition casino during K-days. His wife asked him why so many people there knew him. He replied, "Oh, well, I'm doing some business with these people." Everybody laughed. (Field notes)

> I met an acquaintance from my academic circle in the casino. He seemed embarrassed to see me in that environment. When I asked him, "Do you play in the casino often?" He replied quickly, "No, no, this is my first time." However, from the way he played Blackjack, I could tell he was an experienced player. I watched him play for a while. But he was nowhere to be found after I came back from touring other parts of the casino. (Field notes)

The Commitment

Persons who affiliate closely with a social institution, a casino in this case, usually exhibit common characteristics, such as bonding behaviors which include involvement,

attachment, and commitment.

Being involved in the casino means participating in the games on a regular basis and taking an active interest in casino happenings. For example, many casino regulars kept calendars indicating days the casino would be open. They also tended to play in one particular casino, staying at that venue for years even though several casino locations existed in the city. Furthermore, they noticed variations in the setting and made comments on them. They also kept informed about new games, rule changes, staff movements, and building renovations.

> Many regular players are really excited by the renovations at the casino, which will be completed by the end of the year. The players at my table keep asking me, "Hey, is it true the whole place is going to be like Las Vegas after they finish the work?" "Is it true that we're going to have a bar here? Are drinks free?" "Are they building a lounge there? Hmm, that'll be nice." "Hey, lots of guys would stay here all day, and they'll never want to leave this place 'cause you'll get everything a guy wants." (Field notes)

Regular gamblers showed their appreciation for the gambling institution through the following ways: making friends with other players and the staff, cheerfully cooperating with other players, and by their willingness to learn basic game strategies. This attachment resulted in a sense of belonging, identification, and emotional support.

> Maria is the coffee lady in the casino, a Korean, in her thirties. Every day she pushes a tray with coffee, soft drinks and junk foods on it and calls, "Coffffeeeeeee, coffffeeeeeee," moving around the game tables. She has worked in the casino since I started. Sometimes players complain she is getting on their nerves by calling like that "coffffffeeeeeeee" with a strange accent. However,

> today we could not hear that sound. What we saw was a younger Korean girl, "Why didn't Maria work here today?" "Yeah, where is Maria, the lady who used to work here?" "Are you going to take over from Maria?" "We like her. She is my friend." "I like to hear her chanting 'coffffeeeee, coffffeeeeeee.' That's very nice. I'm used to that sound." "Is she going to come back? Or has she got another job?" They felt relieved after they learned that Maria would be back tomorrow. (Field notes)

A commitment to the social entity is the final and most important way to bond oneself to it. Commitment was displayed by investing money, time, and energy in pursuing a gambling life style. Without the commitment, the involvement and attachment are unattainable.

> Lady E. is a regular player, a card counter, in her forties. She has many friends in the casino, most of whom are also card counters. Today I overheard her tell others at the table, "My husband and kids went to Don Cherry's (a sports bar) this evening. They asked me, 'Do you want to come with us or do something else?' 'Well,' I said, 'if you give me a choice, I would rather do something else.' Whenever I have the choice, I would like to come here to play cards. I'm not interested in hockey, not even the final games." (Field notes)

A commitment to the gambling institution was also displayed by regulars who showed great interest in casino matters but paid little attention to events in the outside world. For instance, very few regular gamblers watched the NHL final games or the Olympic basketball final which were shown on the TV in the casino.

> Political issues are seldom discussed among players in the casino. However, when a political topic does arise it is usually short lived. Two players, probably farmers, talked about the government's agricultural policies. But the conversation did not last more than two minutes before someone said, "Hey, we're here to play cards. Let's not talk about politics." "Yeah, we're not interested in politics," others concurred. (Field notes)

Summary

The description of the research setting illustrates that the casino provided regular players with much more than a gambling outlet. It also provided them with a variety of services, other forms of entertainment, and the opportunity to affiliate with like-minded others. These benefits seemed to compensate for the inevitable monetary losses as no player can beat the "house edge" over the long haul.

Casino players were categorized into recreationals, occasionals, regulars, and problem gamblers, according to their participation frequency and degree of commitment; and into normative players, card-counters, and non-conformist players, based on their playing strategies and beliefs. The regular and normative players were the most visible and dominant groups in the casino.

The casino had many institutional characteristics that make it like a total institution, and it offered social rewards to players, which lead to the development of a commitment to the gambling institution. On the other hand, regular involvement in gambling estranged gamblers from the outside society.

Chapter Six

CASINO PATRON SURVEY RESULTS

Survey data were used to test the hypotheses related to the proposed theoretical model. Survey results are presented in this chapter in tabular form (Appendix D), along with an explanation and discussion. All bivariate statistical results were evaluated by the one-tailed test of significance. A significance level of .05 was employed as the criterion for statistical significance.

Frequency Distributions

Participation Frequency

The participation frequency of casino respondents is presented in Table 6.1. Recreational players, those participating only once or twice a month in casino gambling, accounted for 12% of the sample. Occasionals, those visiting the casino once or twice a week, represented 39% of the players surveyed, and almost one-half of the respondents (49%) were regulars, averaging 3 days or more per week playing in the casino; (18% played almost everyday). The percentage of regulars found in the survey sample is similar to what was ascertained in the participant observation phase of the study (47%). There was a lower percentage than expected (12%) of recreational players in the survey, as opposed to the participant observation findings, which was about 20% at any

given time. A possible reason for this discrepancy is that recreationals were less likely to use the lounge. They came to the casino to play the games and usually went elsewhere to eat or drink.

Table 6.1

Frequency of Casino Play

Frequency of Play	Frequency	Percent
Only once	5	4%
Once a month	9	8%
Once a week	22	19%
2 days a week	23	20%
3 days a week	21	18%
4 days a week	16	13%
5 days a week	14	12%
Everyday	7	6%
Total	117	100%

Length of Casino Participation

Table 6.2 presents the number of years respondents had been playing in the casino. A small number (5%) had just started gambling in the casino recently. A majority of respondents had played in the casino for years; 40% had played there since the doors opened nearly five years ago. This indicates that a high proportion of the survey respondents were attracted to casino gambling to the extent that they had sustained their involvement over many years.

Table 6.2

Years Playing at the Casino

Years of Playing	Frequency	Percent
1 year	6	5%
2 years	12	10%
3 years	28	24%
4 years	24	21%
5+ years	47	40%
Total	117	100%

Average Amount Wagered Per Hand

Most players (76%) wagered more than $10 per hand (see Table 6.3). The remaining portion of respondents (24%) said they wagered less than $10 per hand. The relatively large amount of money wagered by survey respondents may reflect either the need for sensory stimulation or the desire for status among their peers, since wagering higher stakes usually improves social status in the casino subculture, all other factors being equal.

Table 6.3

Average Wager

Amount	Frequency	Percent
$1-4	12	10%
$5-9	16	14%
$10-14	17	15%
$15-19	30	25%
$20-29	23	20%
$30-39	16	14%
$40-49	3	2%
$50 or more	0	0%
Total	117	100%

Other Leisure Activities Engaged in

Table 6.4 presents the respondents' frequency of participation in other leisure activities. Respondents' favorite leisure activities besides gambling were TV viewing, travelling, going to movies, and reading. Less appealing activities, in order of mention, were joining a health club, going to church, and belonging to a social club. Watching TV as a favorite leisure activity is not surprising. Nowadays, television is omnipresent, at home, in the casino, in bars; it is an indispensable part of modern life, whether we like it or not. The fact that many respondents listed travelling as a preferred leisure activity underscores the finding that a sizable number of local casino goers travel to Las Vegas and other gambling resorts on a yearly basis. Smith (1992) noted that 21% of Albertans who played at an Alberta casino had travelled to Nevada to gamble in the previous year. Respondents' least favorite leisure activities pertained to socializing and bonding to a social group. Perhaps the casino was already meeting their social needs, or individuals lacking outside social connections gravitated to the casino to satisfy their needs of socializing and belonging.

It is interesting to note that 45% of the respondents participated in some form of sports. In fact, this activity is consistent with the leisure activities enjoyed by many respondents, such as going to movies (55%), reading (54%), gardening (42%), and visiting parks (38%). All these

activities have a common attribute; that is, they can alleviate depression by temporarily keeping one's mind off routine worries and problems. Perhaps casino players resorted to these activities to relieve the discomfort induced by monetary losses in the games and the conflicts they continually faced with outside society.

Table 6.4

Respondents' Leisure Activity Preferences

Leisure Preferences	Frequency	Percent
TV viewing	115	98%
Joining a health club	3	2%
Travelling	80	68%
Gardening	49	42%
Reading	63	54%
Belonging to a social club	13	11%
Going to movies	64	55%
Playing sports	52	45%
Window shopping	26	22%
Visiting parks	44	38%
Having a hobby	24	21%
Going to church	6	5%
Total	539	100%

Problem Gambling

Table 6.5 illustrates the degree to which respondents encountered problems with their gambling. Each of the ten questions, selected from the Gamblers Anonymous Questionnaire, identifies a particular gambling-related problem, such as difficulty in sleeping, bad reputation, and unhappy home life

because of gambling. Survey results showed that one in five respondents answered yes to five or more gambling problem questions. Some of these players may, in fact, have been problem gamblers; however, the GA Questionnaire is not a highly valid measure for ascertaining problem gambling behavior. The South Oaks Gambling Screen is recognized as the most valid assessment tool for identifying problem gamblers (Wynne, Smith, & Volberg, 1994). A further 42% of the respondents claimed their gambling caused them problems. Thus, a majority of the players questioned (62%) had at least one gambling related problem. This finding suggests a much higher percentage of problem gamblers than the 5.4% among the adult Alberta gambling population (Wynne, Smith, & Volberg, 1994). This result is not surprising however, given that a high percentage of the sample were hard core regular players. When individuals were asked about gambling problems in the casino, common responses included: "All these people have problems. It's common sense;" "You know what it's like here, you've been here long enough. You know one player, you know them all. Everybody's got some problems here;" "Lots of people here lose their welfare or pension cheques in a few days and go hungry the rest of the month." (Field notes)

Table 6.5

Frequency of Gambling Problems

Problems	Frequency	Percent
No problem	45	38%
One problem	17	15%
Two problems	15	13%
Three problems	9	8%
Four problems	7	6%
Five or more	24	20%
Total	117	100%

Demographic Characteristics

The survey data revealed the following demographic characteristics of the sample, (refer to Appendix D for detailed information). Fifty-eight percent of the sample were middle-aged (between 30 and 59 years of age); 20% were elderly (more than 60 years old). Male respondents represented 79% of those surveyed. Forty-four percent of the informants were immigrants; one-half of those belonged to ethnic minorities. In comparison, 32% of the casino participants were found in the participant observations to be elderly, 84% male, and 48% ethnic minorities. Although both sets of data showed an over-representation of casino participants in these categories, as opposed to those in the general population, the participant observation data demonstrated a higher percentage than the survey data in all these categories. This may mean that casino participants in these categories were under-represented in the survey sample.

Of the survey respondents, 48% were unmarried; this group breaks down as follows: 11% widowed, 9% divorced, 9% separated, 5% living with a partner, and 14% never married. Thirty-eight percent spoke a language other than English as a child. Fifty-eight percent had household incomes lower than $26,000 a year. Forty-five percent had less than a high school education, and 80% had less than a post-secondary education. Fourteen percent were unemployed and another 20% were employed on a part-time basis. Fourteen percent were retired. Finally, 49% of the respondents belonged to the working class, a combination of lower middle, upper lower and lower classes. The overall demographic profile of survey participants shows an over-represention of individuals from disadvantaged groups.

Females were under-represented in the sample. The reasons for this might be two-fold. First, society has a double standard regarding female gamblers. They are stigmatized to a greater degree so are less likely to engage in gambling generally, especially hard-core casino gambling. Second, females prefer games of pure luck such as the lottery and Bingo in contrast to the mixed skill and luck gambling of Blackjack (Rosecrance, 1988).

Respondents who said they lost regularly outnumbered those who said they won regularly in casino games, by a ratio of 5 to 1 (refer to Appendix D for detailed information). This ratio is considerably lower than Smith's (1992) finding that only 6% of his randomly selected Alberta respondents reported

being ahead in their gambling ventures. However, it should be noted that respondents typically exaggerate on the positive side when answering this type of question. This could mean the losses are more extreme than reported (Smith, 1992), especially for casino regulars, who may be more predisposed to say they are winning when they are not, since a winning player has a higher status among the casino players.

The range of largest bets players had ever placed ranged from $2 to $1000. Respondents' favorite forms of gambling other than casino games were lotteries and Sports Select. These two forms of gambling were convenient for casino goers. They could purchase lottery or Sports Select tickets from the security guards in the casino and from hundreds of other lottery outlets in the city. Another reason is that these forms of gambling do not require much time and do not interrupt regular players' attendance at the casino. The Alberta Survey (Smith, 1992) also found lottery ticket purchasing to be casino goers' favorite alternative form of gambling.

Influence of the Independent Variables

Table 6.6 presents a comparison of the respondents' scores measured on the scales of four independent variables--emotional support, moral support, life satisfaction, and job satisfaction, with the scores expected in the population at large. The expected means in the table are, in fact, the

arithmetic means of the scores on the scales, which are then extrapolated to represent the actual means that would be obtained from a larger population.

Table 6.6

Comparison of Mean Scores for Independent Variables

Scale	Measured Mean	Measured Std Dev	Expected Minimum	Expected Maximum	Expected Mean
Emotional Support	25.3	9.1	6	42	24
Moral Support	30.9	9.5	6	42	24
Life Satisfaction	16.1	6.3	4	28	16
Job Satisfaction	3.6	1.4	1	6	3.5

The measured and expected means for all four variables showed no significant differences. Perhaps survey respondents as a whole had similar attitudes toward the casino or the ethics of gambling as did the population at large, and that casino goers found their lives and jobs as satisfying as would be expected of others in the outside society.

Bivariate Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

A bivariate analysis was utilized to investigate the hypotheses derived from the theoretical model. Pearson Product-Moment correlations were used to ascertain the strength of the associations between dependent and independent

variables. The use of the t-test and the chi-square test was employed to determine whether non-regulars and regulars differed significantly in various aspects of their gambling behaviors.

Associations between Commitment and Other Variables

As shown in Table 6.7, three of the five correlations were statistically significant. Also, the correlation coefficients were very high for the relationships between commitment to the gambling institution and attitude toward the ethics of gambling (or moral support), and commitment and life satisfaction, indicating a strong association between these variables. A commitment to the gambling institution and problem gambling showed a moderately significant association. The findings are congruent with the participant observations that showed regulars perceiving themselves as morally superior and having more problems in outside society and more gambling-related problems. Consequently, the following hypotheses are supported by the results of the study.

> Hypothesis 1b. Commitment to the gambling institution is positively related to one's attitude toward gambling (or the moral support).
>
> Hypothesis 2a. Commitment to the gambling institution is negatively related to levels of life satisfaction.
>
> Hypothesis 3. The more committed one is to the gambling institution, the more likely one is to become a problem gambler.

Table 6.7

Pearson Product-Moment Correlations between Commitment to Gambling Institution and Other Variables

	EMOTION	ATTITUDE	LIFE	JOB	PROBLEM
COMMITMENT	.155	.755	-.522	-.052	.183
	(117)	(117)	(117)	(117)	(117)
	P> .050	P< .000	P< .000	P> .100	P< .050

(COEFFICIENT/ (CASES) / ONE-TAILED SIG)

The associations between commitment and emotional support (or the attitude toward casino), and between commitment and job satisfaction were not statistically significant. Notwithstanding, the correlations for these two relations are in the hypothesized direction; that is, a positive relationship between commitment and emotional support, and a negative relationship between commitment and job satisfaction existed. These findings, though not statistically significant, support the following hypotheses to a lesser extent.

> Hypothesis 1a. Commitment to the gambling institution is positively related to the emotional support (or attitude toward the casino) found in the gambling institution.

> Hypothesis 2b. Commitment to the gambling institution is negatively related to job satisfaction.

In retrospect, the non-significant results for the above two hypotheses may be a result of poorly phrased questions. The casino is an institution consisting of management, staff,

players, and gaming paraphernalia. When asked to rate the casino, a respondent may have rated certain aspects quite favorably, for example the players or the gaming paraphernalia; on the other hand, the same individual could have rated it unfavorably on a "bad" day. Thus, the ratings of the casino may depend on the respondent's mood at the time, possibly caused by a win or loss in the casino. A problem with the job satisfaction variable is that many unemployed and retired regular players who were unhappy with their outside lives might have been quite satisfied with their former jobs. Therefore, the satisfaction with one's former job cannot explain the committed gambling behavior at the present time.

Differences between Regular and Non-regular Casino Gamblers

The statistical analyses of differences between regular and non-regular players were intended to test the hypotheses and to provide a deeper understanding of the thoughts and practices of regulars, who were the focus of the present study. Regular players tended to gamble more often, bet more money, and have less time for outside activities, so they were more committed to the gambling institution than the non-regulars. In this sense, the comparison between regulars and non-regulars was virtually that between the more committed and less committed players.

T-tests of the differences. As shown in Tables 6.8, 6.9, 6.10, and 6.11, all the t-tests had statistically significant results. Casino regulars had more favorable attitudes toward

the casino (or emotional support) and toward the ethics of gambling (or moral support) than did non-regulars. This result indicates that casino regulars had a more favorable attitude toward the casino than did the general population, even though survey respondents as a whole showed similar attitudes as the population at large (see Table 6.6). Regulars also felt less satisfied with their lives and jobs than their non-regular counterparts. Based on these significant findings, hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b are supported.

The possible reasons for the significant relations between commitment and emotional support, and between commitment and attitude toward gambling, as found in the t-tests and not in the correlations are as follows. Firstly, it is easier to obtain a significant result on a t-test than on a correlation in light of the statistical sophistication; for example, a few extreme cases would not have as much impact on the correlation coefficient as on the significance level of the t-test. Secondly, because of the similarities between regulars and occasionals, and the two-way movements between them, they might have close scores on some scales. If so, the phenomenon would affect a correlation coefficient more so than a t-score.

Table 6.8

T-test for Emotional Support

	NUMBER OF CASES	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T VALUE	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	1-TAIL PROB.
REGULARS	58	29.3	8.317			
NON-REG.	59	21.4	8.276	5.16	115	0.000

Table 6.9

T-test for Attitude toward Gambling

	NUMBER OF CASES	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T VALUE	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	1-TAIL PROB.
REGULARS	58	34.1	6.235			
NON-REG.	59	23.8	8.370	7.57	115	0.000

Table 6.10

T-test for Life Satisfaction

	NUMBER OF CASES	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T VALUE	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	1-TAIL PROB.
REGULARS	58	11.4	4.080			
NON-REG.	59	19.2	5.605	8.57	115	0.000

Table 6.11

T-test for Job Satisfaction

	NUMBER OF CASES	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T VALUE	DEGREES OF FREEDOM	1-TAIL PROB.
REGULARS	58	2.8	1.156			
NON-REG.	59	4.4	3.080	3.72	115	0.000

Chi-square tests of the differences. The Chi-square test results have substantiated hypothesis 4a.

> Hypothesis 4a. Individuals from disadvantaged groups (such as immigrants, ethnic minorities, the unemployed, the poorly educated, and the lower class) are more likely to seek social rewards in a casino and be more prone to having conflicts with the outside society, and therefore to be more committed to the gambling institution.

The Chi-square test results revealed no significant difference between regulars and non-regulars according to age (Table 6.12), which means that age groups were equally represented among regular and non-regular casino players. The reason for this may be that the young and middle aged are not as advantaged as they once were. People in these age groups are facing an ever-increasing unemployment rate and unsteady income (14% unemployed and 20% part-time employed in the sample, for example), so the young and middle aged may have also attended the casino to escape from the outside society and to seek social rewards in the gambling institution.

Table 6.12

Chi-square Test for Age

	REGULAR 1	NON-REG. 2	ROW TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIG-NIFICANCE
1	35	39	74	0.59	1	P>0.80
Under 49 years old	37	37	63%			
	-2	2				
2	23	20	43			
50 & up	21	22	37%			
	2	-2				
COLUMN TOTAL	58	59	117			
	49.6%	50.4%	100%			

Regular and non-regular casino-goers showed no significant differences in terms of their immigration status (see Table 6.13), or in whether or not they had learned English as a child (see Table 6.14); however, there was one significant difference in terms of ethnicity, indicating that visible minority group members were more likely to gamble regularly than respondents of Canadian or European descent. According to these results, being an immigrant or learning a language other than English as a child did not necessarily put one in a disadvantaged position in terms of political and economic power, as long as one is not a visible minority. The ability to speak two languages, in fact, can be an advantage in landing a job.

Table 6.13

Chi-square Test for Immigration Status

	REGULAR 1	NON-REG. 2	ROW TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIG-NIFICANCE
Born in Canada 1	36 32 4	30 33 -3	66 56%	1.73	1	P>0.10
Immigrated 2	22 26 -4	29 26 3	51 44%			
COLUMN TOTAL	58 49.6%	59 50.4%	117 100%			

Table 6.14

Chi-square Test for Language Learned as Child

	REGULAR 1	NON-REG. 2	ROW TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIG-NIFICANCE
1 English	35 36 -1	38 37 1	73 62%	0.15	1	P>0.90
2 Other	23 22 1	21 22 -1	44 38%			
COLUMN TOTAL	58 49.6%	59 50.4%	117 100%			

Table 6.15

Chi-square Test for Ethnicity

	REGULAR 1	NON-REG. 2	ROW TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIG-NIFICANCE
1 Canadian & European	23 29 -6	36 30 6	59 50%	5.32	1	P<0.025
2 Minority	35 29 6	23 30 -7	58 50%			
COLUMN TOTAL	58 49.6%	59 50.4%	117 100%			

Table 6.16

Chi-square Test for Marriage

		REGULAR 1	NON-REG. 2	ROW TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIG-NIFICANCE
Married	1	19 30 -11	42 31 11	61 52%	16.58	1	P<0.000
Other	2	39 28 11	17 28 -11	56 48%			
COLUMN TOTAL		58 49.6%	59 50.4%	117 100%			

There was a significant difference between regulars and non-regulars with respect to marital status (see Table 6.16). More regular players were widowed, divorced, separated, living with a partner, or never married than were non-regulars. An explanation for this finding could be that those without a family have fewer constraints keeping them from the casino, or that those gambling regularly lead solitary lives because of the stigmatization and conflicts they encounter in the outside society.

According to the statistically significant results shown in Tables 6.17, 6.18, 6.19, and 6.20, players belonging to disadvantaged groups such as low income, poorly educated, unemployed, and working class background were more likely to gamble regularly. As a consequence, hypothesis 4a is tentatively supported.

Since players from disadvantaged groups tended to be more committed to the gambling institution, and since commitment was found to correlate positively with problem gambling, it can be inferred that players from disadvantaged groups have a greater chance of becoming problem gamblers. Thus, hypothesis 4b is corroborated by the survey data.

Hypothesis 4b. Individuals from disadvantaged groups are more likely to become problem gamblers.

Table 6.17

Chi-square Test for Income

	REGULAR 1	NON-REG. 2	ROW TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIG-NIFICANCE
1 <$25,999	42 34 8	25 34 -9	67 58%	10.17	1	P<0.010
2 >$26,000	16 24 -8	34 25 9	50 42%			
COLUMN TOTAL	58 49.6%	59 50.4%	117 100%			

Table 6.18

Chi-square Test for Education Level

	REGULAR 1	NON-REG. 2	ROW TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIG-NIFICANCE
1 Less than high school	33 26 7	19 26 -7	52 44%	6.79	1	P<0.010
2 High school & up	25 32 -7	40 33 7	65 56%			
COLUMN TOTAL	58 49.6%	59 50.4%	117 100%			

Table 6.19

Chi-square Test for Employment Status

	REGULAR 1	NON-REG. 2	ROW TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIG-NIFICANCE
1 Employed	30 39 -9	48 40 8	78 67%	11.31	1	P<0.000
2 Other	28 19 9	11 19 -8	39 33%			
COLUMN TOTAL	58 49.6%	59 50.4%	117 100%			

Table 6.20

Chi-square Test for Social Status

	REGULAR 1	NON-REG. 2	ROW TOTAL	CHI-SQUARE	D.F.	SIG-NIFICANCE
1 Middle class & up	24 30 -6	36 30 6	60 51%	4.93	1	P<0.050
2 Working class	34 28 6	23 29 -6	57 49%			
COLUMN TOTAL	58 49.6%	59 50.4%	117 100%			

Summary

The demographic profiles provide valuable information on casino patrons. Almost half the sample were regular casino gamblers; most had played for several years and wagered more

than $10 on average per play. They liked watching TV, travelling, going to movies, and reading, while generally eschewing socializing activities. A higher than estimated percentage of players were potential problem gamblers. Individuals of disadvantaged groups were overrepresented among this group.

The results of the Pearson Product-Moment correlations between commitment and other variables, and of t-tests of the differences between regulars and non-regulars generally support hypotheses 1, 2, and 3.

> Hypothesis 1. Commitment to the gambling institution is positively related to the social rewards received in the gambling institution.
>
> Hypothesis 2. Commitment to the gambling institution is positively related to conflicts with the outside society.
>
> Hypothesis 3. The more committed one is to the gambling institution, the more likely one is to become a problem gambler.

Hypotheses 4a and 4b are supported by the results of Chi-square tests in most categories, including ethnicity, income, education level, employment status, and social status, with the exclusion of age, immigration status, and language learned as a child.

Chapter Seven

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW FINDINGS

As one source of case study information, in-depth interviews can provide important insights because situations are reported and interpreted through the eyes of the participants. Respondents can also provide information on behaviors that cannot be observed in the study. This chapter conveys the knowledge gained from in-depth interviews with eight regular gambling informants and provides a gambling life history of one informant.

Monetary Rewards versus Social Rewards

It is obvious that gamblers come to the casino to wager money. If one has time and money, the games are available for twelve hour stretches. If you have the financial wherewithal, you can play up to three hands in Blackjack or the whole table in Mini-Baccarat, but if you have no money, you are excluded from the action. Player behaviors range from ecstasy when winning, to frustration when losing. On the surface, the chance to win money seems to be the paramount goal of casino gamblers. The possibility of a monetary reward was the primary reason for gambling given by interviewees.

> I believe people gamble for money. Yeah, money! I like to win money too, lots of money. I'm not here for entertainment or a night out. No, I'm here for more serious business--making some money. I'm trying to figure out how to beat the dealer all the time. I know which dealer is hot and which is not. I try

> to avoid the hot dealers. It seems that I can win with some dealers, but not those hot, tough dealers. (Notes)

The reality of the situation is that regular casino-goers cannot win money in the long run, simply because of the insurmountable odds they face. Suprisingly, interviewees were aware of this fact.

> So far I don't know anybody who has won money yet, but I know people playing here who have lost their houses, cars, and businesses. Where do you think they get the money from to have this nice building, all these lights? Who is paying the dealers, uh? Us, the players. If we don't lose, there aren't any casinos around. I win sometimes, but I know I lose most of time. I've lost more money than I've won. I should at least own a table here with the money I've lost to the house. (Notes)

Respondents' recognition of this negative expectation makes seeking monetary rewards a questionable motivation. If winning money was the only goal of casino gamblers, ultimately, there would be no regular players left in the casino. The recurring negative feedback should be a strong deterrent in keeping prospective regular gamblers away from the casino.

> Speaking of why I gamble even though I know I'm losing, well, I guess whether I win or lose doesn't really matter to me. When I make a bet, especially if I wager more than those around me, or I can stay in action longer than others, I feel that I'm the most important person in the whole world, a big shot as people like to say it. People look at me differently, they respect me. I feel so contented and satisfied. (Notes)

> I know I've lost a lot of money here. The other day I dropped about a thousand bucks. Here I am, back again. It's stupid, isn't it? I know it sounds a bit strange, but I do feel comfortable here, like the saying, "You want to go where everybody knows your

> name." I know a lot of people in this place. Whenever I feel like being with friends or talking to someone, I come here to fulfil the need. The dealers are very nice and friendly if you don't bug them. I enjoy talking to the dealers, especially those pretty girls. You can hardly talk to these types of girls elsewhere, you know. (Notes)

The above statements demonstrate that casino gambling played an important role in fulfilling participants' needs for social rewards, such as self-esteem and group affiliation. The social rewards available to casino regulars may well be a more important motive for participating than their avowed rationalization of winning money. In support of this contention, one respondent used the term "non-materialistic" to describe his outlook on life. For him, money was useful for gaming action, not for material possessions.

> Well, if you ask what I'm going to do with the money I win in the casino, I guess I'm going to gamble more with it, ha ha. Like myself, a lot of guys here don't spend money on things. Take a look around this place, you'll find many players wear the same clothes everyday. Some of them don't even shave or cut their hair. But they have chips worth hundreds of bucks in their hands. They just don't spend on things; they don't care about their appearance. Take myself as an example, I don't have VCR or stereo at home, or drive an expensive car. I don't think these things are important in my life. (Notes)

Money may simply be the consideration that a regular needs to acquire social rewards. Since beating the system or winning money was valued in the casino subculture, any regular showing contempt for the idea of winning or helping others beat the dealer would surely face peer disapproval. Showing an interest in winning money is the first step toward

integration into the casino subculture and an opportunity for group affiliation, emotional and moral support, self-esteem and so forth. A willingness to take risks was also admired by players and was a basis for achieving status in the casino subculture.

Multiple Involvements

The observed casino provided a range of amenities for the comfort of its customers. In addition, the casino was a group setting where gamblers often acted in concert. Even though players spent most of their time in the casino playing cards, interaction between players did occur, and friendships developed, especially amongst the regulars. Few regulars ever came to the casino to play all day without engaging in some social interaction.

> I don't have much time for socializing here. I come here to gamble, nothing else. We talk to each other only during shuffling time. Well, we do exchange words during the game. I like to get suggestions as to how to play a particular hand from some experienced players. Sometimes we discuss what strategies we should use to change the cards when the dealer is getting hot. I enjoy playing with those who respect my opinion and at the same time can give me advice. Whenever possible, I play with these players. (Notes)

After playing together for a time, players developed partnerships or friendships. Partners often played together, betting on each others' squares--this way they could play two squares without betting the required limit. Sometimes two or more friends took a break from the game to have a cup of

coffee in the dining lounge, chat, and watch TV. Some players made friendly bets on the results of NHL games. Some regulars had such a trustworthy bond that they frequently borrowed money from one another to stay in action. The amount of money borrowed ranged from a few dollars to more than a hundred.

Romantic relationships between regular players or between players and staff members were also known to evolve. A love interest between a player and staff member sometimes boosted the status of the player involved. This type of relationship was common among casino regulars.

> I used to play with S. a lot. But, since he started dating J. [a games manager], he's totally changed. Now he thinks he knows more about the games than anybody else. He likes to tell everybody how to play and what to do. People are buying that 'cause they think he knows something special. But I don't. I saw S. and J. play in St. Albert. They were losing their shirt the way they played. (Notes)

> We have some couples here who look like they are married to each other. They come and go together. They share chips and everything. But they are not married. They are just friends. I remember one day I told a lady to ask her husband to come to our table. She said that wasn't her husband. I was really surprised to hear that. All these years I thought they were husband and wife. (Notes)

Some regulars took gambling trips together. A favorite adventure was driving to Las Vegas as a group. One interviewee related how he and two other regulars went to Las Vegas in a van owned by one of them. They took turns driving, shared the cost of gas and accommodation, and pooled their money to form a common bank to share losses or profits. Respondents revealed that it was a common practice for regulars to travel to Nevada

or other parts of Canada to find casino action during the local Christmas break.

The social interactions of casino regulars made it possible for group affiliation, self-esteem, social status, and identity salience to develop, which, to some extent, ameliorated their conflicts with the outside world. This observation supports a proposition inherent in the theoretical model that the fulfilment of social needs is a reinforcer for casino regulars to commit to the gambling institution.

Casino Subculture

A subculture is an established way of life, that is, a world of special techniques, judgments and attitudes, a way of dealing with problems, defining situations and categorizing people (Vaz, 1976). It produces its own code of ethics and provides its own control mechanisms and sanctions for keeping members in line. Most important, it provides the support of sympathetic others with whom one feels comfortable, who can appreciate one's problems. Casino participants formed such a subculture. When asked about their gambling experiences, respondents talked about their unique way of life and the language peculiar to their subculture.

Regulars had similar philosophies on how to play the games, and they had similar attitudes about how others should play. They categorized other players as being "good," "bad," "smart," "stupid," "experienced," or "inexperienced," based

on their subcultural point of view. Generally, they thought regulars were more experienced and smarter than recreationals. This finding is consistent with the participant observation data which showed that many regulars believed they were intellectually superior to the recreational players.

> The most frustrating thing in a casino is that some players have no idea how to play the games. They could easily spoil the whole table by making a wrong move. Sometimes they take the dealer's breaking card by hitting a hand against a stiff card; other times they help the dealer make the hand by staying short. Actually there are many things an inexperienced player can do to ruin the table, such as jumping in and out, not doubling down, splitting everything. I don't mind losing if everybody at the table plays well. That's luck, you know. But, it's something else if your losing is caused by somebody's stupid mistakes. (Notes)

> It's hard to find a table with all the players playing the same. That's why you need to have some friends whose thinking is similar to yours. Whenever possible, I sit with these people. We know how the others play, so we can predict each others' moves. And it's easier for us to work together to beat the odds. (Notes)

The extent to which a casual recreational player became submerged in the casino subculture was dependent on whether other members actively encouraged, supported, and facilitated his or her involvement in their group. In this sense, new members were selectively recruited into the subculture. Regulars were willing to teach and encourage newcomers who seemed likely to accept their informal norms.

> There are some kids who think they are pretty smart. They don't want to listen to anybody else. They think they have the odds all figured out. In the end they learn the games the hard way. Usually they don't last long. But we have some young people coming in who want to learn everything about the

> game. They respect your experience and ask for your opinion. I like to tell these kind of people some tricks I've learned through my years of playing. (Notes)

These welcoming regulars not only made the casino a more pleasant place for newcomers, they also introduced them to the casino subculture. The friendship and assistance rendered by the regular players helped expedite the transformation process of prospective members into the subculture.

Loneliness

Regular players often lead lonely and isolated lives outside the casino. They had few, if any, close friends. They rarely belonged to social groups that they relied on for emotional support. One interviewee, who was a residence manager and separated from his wife, described his state of loneliness as follows:

> As a building manager, I don't have much to do except for the end and beginning of each month. If I'm not here in the casino, I would see myself sitting around in my apartment with nothing to do, betting on when a bug is gonna land on the table or betting on the exact minute my door will be knocked on by the tenants. I have my TV on all the time when I'm at home. But I don't pay much attention to it, 'cause a lot of the shows are about family life, you know, parents and kids, couples, friends. It just reminds me of how lonely I am, which makes me feel more miserable. I spend a lot of time dealing cards to myself, pretending I'm the players. I take pleasure in beating the dealer and feel rotten when I'm losing. I often do it for hours after I go home from the casino after midnight or when the casino is closed and I have nothing else to do. (Notes)

A frequent explanation given by interviewees for their loneliness was that they spent so much time in the casino in the company of co-players, they had no time to develop close outside relationships. They were afraid that friendships with non-gamblers would interrupt their gambling life style because non-gamblers might disapprove of their gambling behavior.

> I don't want anybody to intrude into my life. I'm fine living the way I am. If I want to meet people, I can just come to the casino. I want the freedom to play cards anytime I want. I hate to be told by another person what I can do and what I can't do. (Notes)

Secondly, some elderly regulars found themselves abandoned by their relatives. As a result, these older casino regulars with grown children were alone in their houses or nursing homes.

> I was a school teacher. Now I'm retired and live alone. All my children are grown-up and have their own families now. Although some of them live in the city, they don't visit me very often. They are busy with their work and family. I don't need them anyhow. I have enough friends here. I enjoy coming to the casino. I don't mind losing a few dollars. I like to meet the people here, especially the dealers. They are all friendly people. Some of them are very humorous and fun to talk to. The Oriental dealers are very polite to the old people. (Notes)

Thirdly, interviewees commented on how regular casino-goers had difficulty making friends outside the casino, simply because they were timid and awkward at developing personal relationships.

> No, I hardly have any close friends outside the casino. It's not that I don't want to have some friends. The thing is it demands a lot of effort to make and keep a friend. You have to be very considerate and compromising. And you have to make

> them happy and not hurt their feelings, you know. You have to be there when you are needed by a friend. I just don't know how to do all these things. Besides saying "hi, how are you", I don't know what else to say to my neighbours. I guess I'm not ready for this kind of relationship yet. (Notes)

Fourthly, some regular players were loners to begin with. They were attracted to gambling partly to mitigate their loneliness and confirm their self-worth to themselves and others.

> I was the youngest in my family. It seemed that I was always excluded when the family went off to enjoy themselves, like trips to the States, nights out to go bowling, you know. I was pushed around so much that I was actually getting to like being alone. I didn't wanna participate in anything at school or get in with other students or parties or anything like that. I was always a loner. Eventually, when I took up gambling, I got to where I wanted to make something of myself. Both my brother and sister have good jobs. I want to prove myself, you know, make people proud of me. (Notes)

Finally, many regular gamblers felt shunned by their relatives and former friends because of their gambling life style. They were stigmatized because of their persistent gambling behavior. This finding supports one aspect of the theoretical model, namely: the stigmatization of regular gamblers contributing to and aggravating their conflicts with the outside society.

> I figure if you spend a lot of time and money gambling, you won't have very many friends or relatives sticking around. I could borrow a few bucks from my relatives and friends when I was on a losing streak before. But when they found out I was a gambler they were reluctant to lend me any money. All of a sudden they become too busy to see me at all. (Notes)

Living with someone, even a spouse, did not guarantee

relief from loneliness. Married respondents also had this strong feeling of isolation in their lives. They felt physically and emotionally alienated from their partners due to a lack of communication in their marriages.

> My family life is a mess. I've got a hysterical wife at home. She's yelling at me all the time. She blames me for everything that goes wrong in the house. I think she just wants to put me down, to make me feel bad, feel worthless, rotten, and stupid. It just drives me crazy. But the crazier thing is that I don't want to leave her. The casino is an ideal place to escape from these problems, I guess. When I come here, I can have peace of mind. I don't feel estranged anymore. I think, to some degree, the casino saved my marriage. (Notes)

The pervasiveness of feelings of loneliness among casino regulars supports the hypothesis that life satisfaction in the outside society is negatively related to commitment to the gambling institution. That means a regular who is dissatisfied with his or her life in the outside world tends to seek out a gambling venue for satisfaction. It is also congruent with the survey result which showed a statistically significant association between a low level of life satisfaction and a high level of commitment to the gambling institution. It appeared that gambling involvement made the lives of lonely individuals less satisfactory in the outside world.

Experience Closure

Inasmuch as regular casino-goers spent most of their free time in the casino, it left them little time to participate in other leisure activities or meaningful experiences outside

the casino. One form of closure noted earlier was the limited friendships regulars had outside the casino. On one hand, casino regulars found it hard to make new friends because of their sustained presence in the casino and their unusual lifestyle. On the other hand, old friendships faded away after they became immersed in the casino subculture. A friendship lasts only if there is a fair exchange between the participants.

> I didn't need any of my old friends when I was preoccupied with gambling. But, when I took a break from the action after a heavy loss and attempted to renew those friendships, I suffered another kind of loss. I found those friends weren't there anymore; I was completely alone, I mean alone. Some of them kept silent after receiving my calls. Others were like strangers to me. We didn't know what to talk about 'cause we no longer have anything in common. (Notes)

These casino regulars had little interest in other leisure activities. Their two major pastimes were watching TV and gambling. They regarded activities such as bowling and dancing, as dull and a waste of time. As for TV viewing, they mainly watched sports programs because they wagered on the results of the games, either through Sports Select or with fellow gamblers. Watching TV and gambling were complementary activities for regular gamblers.

As noted earlier, some casino regulars held a non-materialistic outlook toward life. Material possessions seemed unimportant; few owned many electronic gadgets, spacious houses (many do not own a house), elegant furniture,

fashionable clothes or expensive cars. However, although the respondents emphasized the fact that the lack of material possessions was due to their attitude toward life, another reason might be that they had lost so much money gambling that they could not afford expensive possessions.

Another significant experience closure for regular gamblers was their inability to attain good jobs. This was usually due to an unstable work record, a lack of proper references, a limited education and work experience, and perhaps, the stigma of being a gambler.

> Nowadays every job needs experience and some training background. Even those stupid jobs like washing dishes and flipping burgers require experience. How am I supposed to have the experience if nobody gives me a chance to get any experience? Well, you might say I would have a better chance to find jobs if I didn't gamble as much. To look at it this way, a lot of folks out there who don't gamble at all cannot find a job. If I didn't come here to kill the empty hours, I might end up roaming the streets or end up in jail. I think gambling is way better than drinking or doing drugs. I know a lot of people without steady jobs doing all kinds of illegal things 'cause they don't know anything better to do. (Notes)

Some regular gamblers voluntarily shut themselves out of other experiences. They believed that engaging in other activities endangered their concentration on the single, most important endeavour in their lives--gambling.

> When I come here everyday as a steady player, I don't give a damn what else is going on. The whole world could fall apart for all I care. I don't care who's winning the Gulf War or who's winning an election. I don't even follow it in the papers. I have my own problems to take care of, that is, to make back my losses and to win money. That's the

thing about gambling. We don't give damn. (Notes)

The narrow focus commonly shown by casino regulars supports an assumption of the theoretical model that conflicts with the outside society are negative reinforcers that strengthen one's gambling commitment. This finding is also consistent with the survey results that showed regulars being more likely than non-regulars to be dissatisfied with their jobs and lives in outside world.

Costs of Disinvolvement

A major factor that can affect one's continuation in casino gambling is the personal cost involved in making the transition to a more conventional lifestyle. Once individuals came to terms with the initial hardships of casino gambling, such as hostile comments if they violated the informal norms, losing heavily because of their inexperience, and the social stigma of being labelled a gambler, they were apt to continue in the setting comfortably and indefinitely.

Regular players made tremendous financial and emotional investments to gain the persona of a skillful and confident gambler. They had probably lost a great deal of money before gaining the essential skills to hold their own in the casino games. At this stage in their gambling odyssey they thought they had a better chance of recouping their losses than ever before. Under the circumstances, it was very difficult, if not impossible, for them to abandon the gambling scene for other

endeavours.

> After all these years of playing, I've known the games inside out. Lots of times I could tell what cards would come out and what hands the dealers would get. I guess after a while you develop a sixth sense. You'll know which dealer's hot, which table's gonna win, when you'd hit and when you'd better stay, your sixth sense will tell you. But my sixth sense is not sharp enough yet. If I keep on playing, one of these days I'm gonna win big. (Notes)

Another cost of disinvolvement was the loss of networks and friendships developed over the years in the casino. Furthermore, many regular gamblers dreamt about hitting a big jackpot. Stopping gambling meant an end to their dream.

> I'm always trying to convince myself that I am a genius at gambling. Can you imagine what a sense of power that gives me? Sometimes I'm dreaming about the thousands I'm gonna make, how important a man I'm gonna become, how I will no longer need to worry about a job, my boss, or about people liking or not liking me. I will be able to live whatever life I wanna live. I will have my pick of friends, and they will be there when I need them. (Notes)

Players not only got hooked on gambling; they also became attached to their gambling identities. Regular gamblers had generally established a positive self-image in the gambling scene. Leaving the casino behind meant parting with this established identity. It was certainly a daunting task to accept disengagement if a less satisfactory identity awaited them outside the casino. This finding concurs with the observation that identity salience plays an important role in cementing the commitment of casino participants.

> I love the casino, the buzz, the people, the charge of adrenalin. I have made many friends here. I have no real interest in winning lots of money. But I can get a real charge out of betting at the same table

> with other players, seeing them lose while I win. I get a great deal of satisfaction, too, betting against the dealers and beating them. I guess I just have to show how smart or good I am, just to inflate my ego. I don't think I can get the same feeling anywhere else. (Notes)

Problems Associated with Regular Casino Gambling

One hazard associated with regular casino gambling was the possibility of becoming addicted to gambling. When this happened, individuals had an overpowering urge to gamble, despite their best efforts to stop.

> Once I've been hooked on the games, I can't stop. Although I've kept saying to myself, "Quit. You've had enough. Don't ever come back. You've got your business, your property, your family. It's not worth it," I just can't do it. I have to keep on gambling so I can get back my losses. Sometimes I've almost lost concern for everything outside of gambling. The thought that I won't have enough money to gamble with the next day is sickening. I guess it is like a drug addict's fear about not having enough money to get the next day's supply. (Notes)

Inevitably, an obsession with gambling led to another serious problem for these persistent gamblers--losing heavily. They eventually lost to the point where they could no longer afford to gamble regularly.

> I don't remember when I started to lose control, to gamble recklessly, to lose. There was this one time I can still remember freshly. I was about $2,000 ahead at the baccarat table. I said to myself that now I could bet just $500 a day. If I won the same amount each day, I would come out with a fortune. But after I bet that day's $500 and lost that, I bet the following day's $500 and lost that, too. Before I even noticed, I lost another $1,000 besides. There went all my winnings. But the next night and the next I was back, and by the end of the month I had lost close to $5,000 in total. After that I had to quit for a while 'cause I was completely broke. But

> when I have money in my pocket again, I just can't wait to come back here. I know this money will be gone as well. (Notes)

When regular casino gamblers lost consistently to the point where they could not afford to gamble anymore, their mind focused constantly on getting back into action. The gambler became restless and irritable until this desire was fulfilled. This single-mindedness, coupled with a state of anxiety, negatively affected relationships and job performance.

> After the excitement of gambling is gone, it becomes a bore and after that I get quite sick of it, but I still have to go. My whole personality has changed since I started to gamble regularly. One of my longtime friends noticed I was edgy and irritable. I had never been that way before. When she asked me in a nice way if I had a problem, I barked at her to leave me alone. Yeah, they all left me alone all right. Actually I have no friends left. The gambling starts to affect my work, too, so you know it's real bad. I've screwed up things many times. Sometimes I just sit there daydreaming instead of working. I may get fired anytime. (Notes)

Married casino regulars faced the ever present danger of undermining their family lives. Persistent gambling and the consequent heavy losses often made the lives of gamblers and their family members miserable.

> Talking about gambling problems, yeah, I've got problems. Who doesn't? I think I've lost interest in my wife, Lindsay, and I don't have any time for the kids either. Before, they were the most important things in my life. Now my gambling has driven them out of my concern. When Lindsay gets upset about my gambling, I get pretty nasty with her, and then we'll start quarrelling not only about the gambling but about everything. The children begin to get on my nerves. I yell at them and scold them a lot. I know I shouldn't act like this, but

I can't help it. (Notes)

Some players relied on casino gambling to cope with their depression and avoid everyday problems. However, the casino is not a paradise where a player can stay happy forever. The games are over at the end of the day, and the money runs out sooner or later. Regulars faced this stark reality every time they left the casino. They ended up more depressed when they lost, then they felt compelled to return to the casino as a way of countering their dispirited state. This became a vicious circle until, ultimately, the player's financial and spiritual resources were exhausted.

> Most of the time I win some, lose some, no big wins. But I don't care. Besides winning it's the excitement and getting away from my problems that keep me coming here. I may have an argument with my boss, or an unpleasant encounter with my customers, and it can bother me all day and get me quite depressed. But once I get into the casino, it will be all gone. I will feel great at the moment the cards are dealt to me. But on the way home, the problem will come back again, and if I lost that night, it is much worse. Sometimes I get so depressed after a big drop, I don't feel like living in this world anymore. (Notes)

These comments from the in-depth interview findings regarding problem gambling correspond with the survey results showing that commitment to the casino is positively correlated with problem gambling.

Life History of a Regular Casino Gambler

Mr. M was in his early thirties when I met him. He was a friendly, sociable fellow: outgoing, cheerful, enthusiastic,

and generous. He liked singing for friends, and was comfortable interacting with all types of people. He enjoyed inviting friends to dinner, either to his home or to a restaurant where he paid the bill. He liked being surrounded by friends. He was eager to lend a helping hand when required, but he had no close friends when I first met him. Mr. M was energetic and hardworking, and got by without much sleep. He held two or three jobs simultaneously during our acquaintanceship.

Mr. M was hyperactive and easily bored. He was constantly in need of stimulation. He had difficulty concentrating on a TV program for more than ten minutes without changing channels. He seldom watched a complete show on TV. When driving, he liked doing several things at the same time, such as changing gears, smoking, playing with the radio and looking in the mirror. This might be why he had several car accidents and paid three times more than the average driver in insurance premiums.

Mr. M was not discouraged by failure or "losing face." He welcomed risk, adventure and challenge. He craved success, which he measured in terms of wealth rather than career aspirations. He bought lottery tickets and enjoyed fantasizing about what would happen if he won a big jackpot. One time he announced he had found a high quality ginseng (the cure-all medicine in the Orient) and that he was going to be extremely rich. Later, the "ginseng" turned out to be just an ordinary

worthless plant. But he recovered in no time from this setback and started his search for a shortcut to wealth all over again.

Mr. M was born into an extended family that had been very wealthy before the Chinese Communist Party took power and confiscated the family properties. After graduation from high school, Mr. M joined the Chinese People's Liberation Army, an institution revered by ordinary citizens. In the army, Mr. M learned to drive and repair motor vehicles. He found a job with a transportation company as a truck driver after leaving the service. Because transportation was restricted in China, truck drivers were paid generously to run errands during their spare time. Thus, truck driving was among the wealthiest and highest status jobs in China at the time.

About ten years ago, his future wife emigrated to Canada under the sponsorship of her cousins. A year later, she returned to China to marry Mr. M. Before long Mr. M reunited with his wife as an immigrant in Canada. Going abroad, especially to North America, was the only way for a Mainland Chinese person to get rich in a short time back then. People who had emigrated to Canada automatically became big shots in the Chinese community, envied and admired by everybody, no matter who they were or what they knew.

Mr. M could not find a job in Canada, mainly because he did not know a single word of English. He depended on his wife, who knew a little English before coming to Canada, to

earn a living working as a waitress. After taking a few English as a Second Language courses, Mr. M got a job in a Chinese restaurant, working as a dishwasher earning the minimum wage. He worked extremely hard, often twelve hours a day, seven days a week. He was clever enough to learn how to cook. Later he was promoted to the position of cook and eventually to chef. Unfortunately, his wages did not change because the restaurant owner knew he would have difficulty finding a job elsewhere due to his poor communication skills. Indignant as a result of his employer's insensitive treatment, Mr. M quit to work in another Chinese restaurant, where the treatment was no better. Over the years Mr. M worked as a cook in three Chinese restaurants, earning near minimum wages, no matter how hard or how well he worked. When he learned to communicate better in English, he landed a night shift janitor's job in a food processing plant, where the wages were double what he earned in the Chinese restaurants. Mr. M remained in this job for many years.

Mr. M was introduced to casino gambling by one of his restaurant employers. He fell in love with the activity almost immediately. Having few hobbies or outside interests, Mr. M started going to the casino frequently. He won money on a regular basis for the first half year. However, his gambling involvement slowed down after his wife gave birth to a son. He loved his son very much; he played with him for hours. Taking care of his son and playing with him occupied much of

Mr. M's spare time.

Unfortunately, his son died from SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) at the age of six months. Mr. M cried for two months over the death. Mrs. M could not bear staying in the same place where her son had lived, so she went back to China and stayed with her family for half a year. Left behind and having no one for emotional support, Mr. M turned to casino gambling to tranquilize his emotional pain. He gambled heavily and spent all his spare time there. From then on, he became a steadfast regular and a normative player at Casino ABS, wagering approximately $10 a hand. One year later, his back was injured during work. He took a half year disability leave from work, collecting worker's compensation. During that period casino gambling became his central focus.

The inevitable happened: Mr. M started losing thousands of dollars. Although he showed signs of problem gambling, such as an unhappy home life, remorse after gambling, an urge to win back losses and a desire to return to win more, losing more than intended, and considered robbing a bank to finance his gambling, he sometimes kept his losing under control. For example, he would set aside most of his income for paying bills and buying groceries, and he used only disposable money for gambling, so his basic livelihood was not threatened by his excessive gambling. His wife condoned his gambling although she did not encourage it. She believed that gambling with restraint was more acceptable than alternatives such as

drinking, taking drugs, or womanizing.

The democratic protest took place in China at the end of 1980s; then the Tian'anmen Square Massacre occurred. The overseas Chinese and students all over the world condemned the massacre and the Chinese Communist regime. Mr. M was informed of the event and, subsequently, introduced by the researcher to the Chinese Democracy Promotion Society, organized by Chinese students and scholars at the University of Alberta. Mr. M had no previous contact with this group, but because of his enthusiasm and former military training, Mr. M was soon elected an executive of the Society, responsible for security. He embraced the job with his heart and soul, organizing rallies, protests, and meetings, negotiating with the Canadian government to implement economic sanctions against the Chinese government and to grant asylum for Chinese students abroad. He even served as editor of the Society newspaper. Mr. M was pleased with himself in his new position in the Chinese community. He once said to Mrs. M, "You should show some respect for me at home. Those professors and Ph.Ds even have to listen to me and obey my orders. I'm an important man now." He was so preoccupied with his job promoting democracy that he had little time left for gambling.

The Chinese Democracy Promotion Society dissolved a year later, but Mr. M had made many friends among the Chinese academic community through his work in the Society. He became a member of the Chinese Students and Scholars Friendship

Association, attending many of its activities. He also joined the Chinese students and scholars' soccer team in the summer, practicing twice a week and competing against other teams from the Chinese community. In the winter, Mr. M organized a ski club for Chinese students, scholars and their families to ski in a nearby resort at a discount cost. During the time when his political consciousness was being raised, Mr. M visited the casino only occasionally, mainly for entertainment. Gambling has not been an important part of his life since.

Summary

It may seem to casual observers and casino gamblers themselves, that people attend casinos solely to win money. However, the close observations and in-depth interviews with regular casino participants indicate that winning money was not the only reason, or even the primary reason these people gambled. In addition to pecuniary gain, they sought social rewards in the setting or tried to escape alienating conditions in their lives.

Besides gambling, casino regulars became involved socially with fellow players and the casino staff. These interactions resulted in the formation of a cohesive group which laid the foundation for a casino subculture.

In the outside society, regular casino participants were lonely individuals. They had limited life experiences, consequently they perceived occupational, educational, and

relationship options as being closed to them. They had to decide if taking an alternative course of action was worth the cost. Generally, making a drastic lifestyle change was not seen as being worth the effort for most regular casino players. Disinvolvement meant a loss of friendships, hope, and a salient identity. Nonetheless, re-establishing outside communal ties may improve a regular gambler's chance of getting back into mainstream society, as demonstrated in the brief life history of Mr. M. No matter how dominant gambling becomes in one's life, the strangle hold can be broken by finding more rewarding activities in the outside society.

Serious personal problems were often the cause and consequence of persistent casino gambling. Addiction, losing more than one can afford, deterioration of friendships, job performance, and family life were often the end result.

Chapter Eight

DISCUSSION

The previous three chapters presented the findings from the triangulation methodology. The purpose of this chapter is to integrate the findings, compare them with the academic literature on gambling, and ascertain the viability of the proposed theoretical model. To provide an overview of the results, comparisons are made across the three separate data-sets. Validity is inferred from agreement between the results of the multimethods and, likewise, invalidity from disagreement. Because of the supplementary function of the multimethods used in this study, some results obtained by one method may not have been duplicated by the other two methods; thus, they provide additional information which may help explain the findings of other research approaches.

The Gambling Institution

Institutional Arrangements

According to the proposed theoretical model, a gambling institution possesses characteristics similar to other total institutions, such as institutional completeness, encompassing tendency, antagonistic relationship, and gambling subculture. All of these gambling institutional arrangements were confirmed in the participant observation phase of the study. Further observations uncovered another institutional

arrangement that was not part of the proposed model, that is, a set of identification practices initiated by the casino for the purpose of developing "joint commitment to the institution." These practices included holiday or festival activities, a family-like atmosphere, communication through media, and a sympathetic reaction to losing players.

Some of these institutional arrangements are also substantiated in the survey and in-depth interviews. Almost one-half the survey respondents were regular gamblers, and 18% played almost everyday. Moreover, a majority of respondents had played in the casino for more than three years, and 40% had played there since the building opened. These findings confirm the assumption that the casino can have a strong encompassing tendency that separates its participants from the outside society, so much so that regular gamblers find it hard to leave the institution, both daily and permanently. This tendency is enhanced by the institutional completeness of the casino.

The results of the in-depth interviews bolstered the validity of the proposed model's notions about institutional completeness and the existence of a gambling subculture. Interviewees said they involved themselves extensively in other aspects of life in the casino besides gambling. They also intimated that casino regulars formed a gambling subculture, a world of special techniques, judgments, attitudes, ways of dealing with problems, defining situations

and categorizing people. An additional finding from the interviews is that the members of the gambling subculture expedited the process of socializing newcomers, which helped perpetuate and solidify the gambling subculture.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, each of the three research methods had limitations in generating certain types of information. In this case, the survey and in-depth interviews were not designed to produce meaningful information on all the institutional arrangements. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the three research techniques did not yield contradictory evidence. All of the findings support the notion that a casino provides more than gambling activity; it provides its participants with a variety of activities and services, social interactions, and a world of its own.

These findings correspond with other studies conducted in an actual gaming situation. For example, Hayano (1982) observed that professional poker players, regulars, and employees formed a subcultural core. The cardroom he frequented also offered a range of goods and services, including television, dining, outside gambling bets, friendships, romance and so forth. Martinez (1983) posited that the gambling milieu is a subculture because of the existence of formal and informal norms in the scene. Rosecrance (1985) noted that an off-track betting shop was an all-engrossing and self-contained social world for inveterate horse players. In this world participants have established

networks of association with other gamblers. Abt et al. (1985) viewed gambling as a "world-building activity" which occurs within social boundaries that create a social organization within the race track or casino. Zola (1963) considered the social setting of an off-track betting establishment to be a safe haven for gambling patrons.

Social Rewards

Through the in-depth interview and participant observation phases of the study it was found that group affiliation, emotional and moral support, self-esteem, and social status were possible social rewards for casino regulars.

Respondents were not overly positive toward the casino or gambling in general, based on the measured mean scores of these two variables. This finding challenges the importance of social rewards in motivating people to gamble because these attitudes are not only a reflection of emotional and moral support, but are also affected by other social rewards. However, t-scores between regular and non-regular casino gamblers revealed that regulars had significantly more favorable attitudes toward the casino and the social acceptability of gambling than did the non-regulars. This finding indicates that social rewards are obtainable in the casino, but they are more salient for the regulars. In fact, regulars enjoyed a higher degree of social status and self-esteem in the casino because the recreationals and occasionals

occupied lower rungs on the status ladder. These social rewards such as group affiliation, emotional and moral support were available only to the subcultural core, which consisted of regular casino goers. Thus, it is axiomatic to say that regulars are more likely to find the gambling institution more socially rewarding than are the non-regulars. This result is consistent with the findings of both the participant observation and the in-depth interviews, since the observations of the social rewards were made, by and large, among the casino regulars, and all of the interviewees were regulars.

The possibility of receiving social rewards in a gambling institution has been reported by other researchers. Rosecrance (1985) suggested that group membership and the accompanying social integration, decision-making opportunities, and opportunity to demonstrate character strength are social rewards attainable by wagering in a gambling place. Rosecrance believed the availability of these rewards are vital in determining whether or not one persists in a gambling activity. Abt et al. (1985) claimed that the social organization and symbolic meaning system of a race track or casino help participants earn social status, personal achievements, self-esteem, and group cohesion. Holtgraves (1988) concurred when he noted that gambling enabled one to present, to oneself and to others, a desired image. Lynch (1990) reported that the creation of hope (which probably

boosts gamblers' self-esteem) was an end in itself for regular poker-machine players. Thompson (1991) discovered that gambling in South American casinos offered an opportunity to demonstrate the cultural value of "machismo," a sense of masculine pride, for Latin American males. Martinez (1983) surmised that the self-esteem and social status of gambling participants can be improved if they abide by the existing informal norms. Herman (1967) concluded that commercialized gambling offers an efficient means for decision-making and enhancing self-esteem to many participants. Goffman (1967) contended that gambling enables an individual to demonstrate the culturally valued characteristics of courage, gameness, integrity, and composure. Kusyszyn and Rutter (1985) found that long term gamblers tended to have higher self-esteem than occasional players. Contrary to the studies of Herman (1967) and Rosecrance (1985), where decision making was reported to be an important social reward for gamblers, this study demonstrates that the casino regulars often relinquished their decision-making opportunities, although this in itself was a decision, by conforming with the subcultural informal norms. It seems that independent decision-making can be in conflict with the other social rewards available in a casino setting. For instance, making decisions that violate the informal norms endangers a person's chance of attaining other social rewards. Therefore, casino regulars recurrently sacrificed their decision-making privileges for a package of social rewards--

group affiliation, emotional and moral support, self-esteem, and social status.

An important consideration in examining the gambling behavior of casino regulars is discovering whether they are attracted to the scene by monetary or social rewards, and determining which is more critical in determining an individual's persistence in playing the games. Gambling researchers (Livingston, 1974; Langer, 1975; Li & Smith, 1976; Lesieur, 1977; Sanders, 1978; Snyder, 1978; Gilovich & Douglas, 1986; and Wagenaar, 1988) emphasized the formal outcome of the game (monetary gain or loss). Their underlying assumption is that gamblers are chasing monetary rewards. On the other hand, the present study and studies cited earlier demonstrate that social rather than monetary rewards are the major attraction that draws and later attaches regular gamblers to the gambling institution. Rosecrance (1985) maintained that continued participation in gambling is mainly done to sustain the social rewards.

According to Rosecrance's proposition, "to the extent that the rewards of horse race gambling exceed the costs, the participants are likely to persist in the activity" (1985, p. 116), --or persistent gambling equals rewards minus costs--it is unlikely that gamblers would continue with casino gambling if the primary reason for their being there is to seek a monetary reward, mainly because gamblers are bound to lose (nearly $20,000 a year for an average regular in Alberta

casinos). Consequently, concentrating on win-loss would inflate the costs of gambling (loss of money is the number one cost on Rosecrance's list) to the point where costs would exceed the rewards which happen to be negligible. Rosecrance's formula signifies that the social rewards must play a more critical role than the potential monetary gain in the persistence of regular gamblers. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain why regulars observed in this study were engaged in what appeared to be anti-economic acts. For instance, Blackjack players at the anchor square sometimes hit their hand, even 17 and over, when they guessed the dealer would get a high card to make a good hand. The only plausible explanation for such behavior is that they sacrificed their hand to save the table; in other words, they sacrificed their money for the social acceptance of the other players. Similarly, Thompson (1991) noted that Latin American males often hit 18s and 19s in Blackjack just to demonstrate their bravado and manliness. It was obvious in that context, that proving to others that you have the "machismo," was more important than winning money.

The Outside Society

The participant observation findings showed that a heavy gambling involvement can corrode the gambler's business connections, friendships, and interaction with significant others, and that the hours spent gambling dissipated time that

could be used for educational or job advancement. In-depth interviews revealed that outside the casino many regulars were societal misfits because they did not have adequate life skills, and that the regular casino-goers frequently faced experience closures. These findings support that part of the theoretical model which presumes that regular involvement in gambling causes conflicts with the outside society, including a loss of outside social networks, disculturation, and value clashes.

The survey results provided statistical evidence to support the above findings. It was found that the leisure activities least participated in by the casino gamblers were those of socializing and bonding to a social group; on the other hand, their two favorite leisure activities, TV viewing and travelling, were closely related to their gambling lifestyle. Casino regulars, as revealed by in-depth interviews, watched sports programs most of the time because they wagered on the games; and many of them travelled to Nevada or other parts of Canada where casinos were operating when the local casinos were closed. Furthermore, it was found that 48% of the respondents were unmarried; 14% unemployed; 20% were employed on a part-time basis; 45% had less than a high school education; and 80% had less than a post-secondary education. There are two explanations for these results. One is that casino gambling attracts those who are male, lonely, unmarried, unemployed or partially employed, under-educated,

and belonging to a visible minority. Another explanation is that persistent gambling negatively affects social networks, marriage, chance of employment, and educational opportunity.

The significant differences between regulars and non-regulars concerning life satisfaction, job satisfaction, marriage, employment, and education, according to t-test and Chi-square results, indicate that gambling negatively impacted casino regulars more than the non-regulars. Regulars, when compared with recreationals and occasionals, were generally less enamored with their jobs and outside life, and more likely to be unmarried, unemployed, partially employed, and completed fewer years of education.

The predicted value conflicts embedded in the model stemmed from preliminary observations in the casino. This study provides partial support for this assertion. For instance, it was found that the casino subculture valued "cooperation" instead of the competitiveness valued in the outside society. The casino subculture was also more concerned with an individual's conformity to the informal norms than with one's ethnicity or outside status. In the same manner, horse race gamblers in Rosecrance's (1985) study viewed their social world of horse race betting as non-competitive, egalitarian, non-threatening, secure, and understanding. Abt et al. (1985) also stressed this status-levelling effect of gambling:

> A participant's individual attributes of beauty, social position, or unique mannerisms and quirks

> tend to be minimized or disappear completely during the playing encounter. We learn that the properties of players outside of their ability to play--in this case to handicap a race or to function in a casino game--are best ignored. The world of the game balances the outside world and--for a time--takes precedence. In this quality, games can be seen to be the personification of democracy, for all prior social positions are outside the frame of reference, the world of a player. Indeed, it is this aspect of playing games, the separation of the person-as-individual from the player-as-person, that is crucial to gambling encounters. No one is supposed to care from which race, religion, or social class one comes, at least for the duration of the game. Ironically, we have much practice in suspending conventional distinctions, living in a bureaucratic rational society where rules often separate positions or roles from the persons behind them. (p. 68)

The notion of regular gamblers being stigmatized by those in the outside society is also supported by both the participant observation and in-depth interviews. For instance, regular casino players concealed their gambling involvement from outsiders, and sometimes felt shunned by non-gambling relatives and friends. It seems that casino gambling, a so-called "hard-core" form of gambling, is still a somewhat tainted activity to some in today's society. The effect of the stigmatization on casino gamblers can be either deterring or negatively reinforcing, depending on the individual's social status and identity salience in the outside world. The fact that individuals with high outside social status and identity salience tend to shy away from casinos may be due to the concern that their reputation, followed by social status and identity salience, would be tarnished if they were known to

participate in local casino gambling. On the other hand, individuals with a low outside social status and identity salience may seek the comfort of casinos to meet their social needs when they feel themselves jettisoned by the outside society.

Although gambling researchers have overlooked the impact gambling has on gamblers' lives in the outside society, a few researchers have provided supporting evidence for the theoretical assumptions of conflicts with the outside society and the stigmatization contained in the model. Rosecrance (1985) argued that apart from losing money and undergoing psychological distress, the costs associated with gambling are juggling participation in gambling and other responsibilities (job, family, education and so forth), and "opportunities foregone." Walters (1994a, 1994b) submitted in his gambling lifestyle theory, that a lack of support, friendship, hobbies, and skills in the outside society is a primary reason for players' committing to a gambling lifestyle. In the same vein Abt and her colleagues (1985) reasoned:

> There is much that is spontaneous about race track and casino gambling which helps to utterly engross the participants.... Such spontaneous involvement may occur when a patron is recognized by track or casino personnel or by another customer--such recognition as a "regular" or VIP conveys instant status in the gambling fraternity and enhances the role of player. This may be one reason why the frequent participant detaches himself from nongambling friends, similar to police who report only a small number of friendships with those outside the force. Similar hours and shared meaning systems and experiences isolate them from "civilians." A kind of entrapment develops; the more

> time a player spends gambling, the less the player can imagine any other form of leisure activity being equally meaningful or engrossing. (p. 72)

In the same study Abt et al. asserted: "The very stigma of deviancy attributed to the gambling status in larger societal terms serves to make fellow gamblers join forces and maintain the players' attraction for the gambling situation" (p. 70).

Dickerson and Adcock (1987) and Griffiths (1995) suggested that there is a relationship between disturbed mood and persistence at gambling for regular players. The association implies that those having problems in the outside society tend to involve themselves in gambling, and that regular involvement in gambling in turn aggravates their previous problems.

The Commitment to Casino Gambling

After considering the financial, social, and psychological costs of gambling, Rosecrance (1985) posed a fundamental question which guided his study: Why do inveterate horse players persist in an activity that is personally so costly? Abt et al. (1985) pursued a similar question in their research: Why do gamblers continue to gamble when they know that the laws of mathematics are against them and that in the long run they must lose to the built-in house advantage? As this study points out, a commitment to the gambling institution is more than just being persistent in continuing gambling. There is an emotional attachment to the institution,

a feeling of being at ease with the new identity formed in the setting, and a faith and trust in the gambling subculture. According to the proposed theoretical model, commitment to the gambling institution is promoted by a double reinforcement process. Social rewards are positive reinforcers that increase the degree of commitment to the gambling institution, whereas conflicts with the outside society are negative reinforcers that are temporarily removed when the player reenters the gambling scene.

The participant observation findings showed that casino regulars took great interest in goings-on in the casino environment, but paid minimal attention to events in the outside world, in addition to spending considerable money, time, and energy pursuing a gambling lifestyle. The in-depth interviews demonstrated many potential costs for the player who stopped gambling; these included: the loss of financial and emotional investments, affiliational networks and friendships, hope, and a salient identity. Of these losses, affiliational networks, friendships, and a salient identity are social rewards included in the model; hope is a psychological reward which, as Lynch (1990) suggested, "may be even more rewarding to gamblers than a large sum of money" (p. 201). The commitment of casino regulars to the gambling institution may be caused by anxiety at the thought of losing the social and psychological rewards they are accustomed to in the casino.

The survey results generally support the theoretical model in terms of a relationship between commitment and attitude toward the ethics of gambling and a negative relationship between commitment to the casino and life satisfaction. Also, committed regulars had more favorable attitudes toward the casino and felt it morally more acceptable to gamble, and were less satisfied with their jobs and lives than were non-regulars.

Rosecrance's (1985) theory that persistent gambling equals rewards minus costs suggested that the higher the costs (including such conflicts with the outside society as juggling participation and opportunities foregone), the less likely one will persist in gambling. However, according to the proposed theoretical model, conflicts in the outside society are a force driving regular gamblers back to the gambling institution. Thus, as opposed to Rosecrance's theory, a reverse relationship occurs in outside society; the higher the costs in outside society, the more likely one will persist in or be committed to gambling. Abt et al. (1985) concurred with these observations:

> Gambling also constitutes the ideal psychological escape by protecting the gambler from the intrusion of potentially negative or nagging outside influences such as unpaid bills, discontented babies, or disapproving relatives. This protection creates the opportunity for spontaneous total involvement in the gambling activity with attendant loss of self-consciousness and a temporary loss of uncomfortable feelings of being "ill at ease" or "out of place" or of judging one's self. (p. 70)

Rosecrance's theory should be amended as results from this study indicate that a more sophisticated formula is needed to explain persistent gambling behavior. A possible revision of Rosecrance's theory is as follows:

(1) Commitment = Rewards - Costs (in the gambling institution)

(2) Commitment = Costs - Rewards (in outside society)

(3) Commitment = (Grewards - Gcosts) x (Ocosts - Orewards)

Phase one of the formula indicates that the degree of commitment to a gambling institution is the outcome of rewards received minus the costs of being in gambling institution. The second phase refers to the gambling commitment which is caused when outside societal costs are higher than rewards. But phases one and two are interrelated and as such cannot individually explain gambling commitment. Consequently, phase three of the formula synthesizes the two preceding phases in an attempt to fully explain commitment to a gambling institution. In the formula, Grewards stands for rewards in the gambling institution; Gcosts stands for costs in the gambling institution; Ocosts stands for costs in outside society; and Orewards stands for rewards in outside society. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that gambling commitment is the result of higher rewards in the gambling institution and/or higher costs in outside society.

According to this revised formula, decreasing one's

commitment to a gambling institution can be achieved either by lessening the rewards in the gambling institution or the costs in outside society, or by augmenting both costs in the gambling institution and the rewards in outside society. However, the social rewards offered in a gambling institution are a magnet for the regulars; moreover, increasing the costs in a gambling institution is unlikely because the house already has an insurmountable advantage. As a result, attempts at reducing a gambler's involvement may improve most expeditiously by concentrating on increasing the rewards and reducing the costs in the outside society.

Mr. M's life history, as depicted in Chapter Seven, demonstrates that an increase in social rewards garnered in outside society can be an effective way of lessening one's commitment to the gambling institution. Mr. M had many of the predisposing factors listed by compulsive gambling treatment specialists (Custer and Milt, 1986) which indicate a person's likelihood of becoming a problem gambler. However, Mr. M's involvement in the Democratic Movement and his affiliation with several social groups (the Chinese Democracy Promotion Society, the Chinese Students and Scholars Friendship Association, and Ski Club) boosted his self-esteem, identity salience, and status, seemingly more than compensating for the rewards he found in the gambling institution.

It is worth mentioning that Mr. M moved to Vancouver two years ago and started gambling regularly in a casino soon

after the move. A year later, Mr. M and Mrs. M were divorced; his regular gambling was partly to blame for the break-up. Mr. M's relapse into regular gambling coincides with the theoretical model in that decreased social rewards in outside society lead to a high commitment in the gambling institution. Having moved from Edmonton and his established social ties, Mr. M resorted to casino gambling, a familiar activity and environment, to satisfy his social needs in a new place. That Mr. M's gambling behavior yielded different consequences in the two cities is because of the different effects of gambling on Mrs. M's sense of financial security. In Edmonton Mr. M gambled with the money left after paying the bills and buying groceries, and Mrs. M saved most of her income in her own bank account, but in Vancouver Mrs. M stayed home to take care of her newborn daughter, and Mr. M became the sole breadwinner. Consequently, Mrs. M's financial well-being was secure in Edmonton and severely endangered in Vancouver by Mr. M's regular gambling.

The Likelihood of Problem Gambling for Casino Regulars

The proposed theoretical model posits a link between a commitment to the gambling institution and problem gambling. Rosecrance (1988) maintained that a commitment to gambling and faulty gambling strategies can contribute to problem gambling. Martinez (1983) opined that total commitment to, and involvement in, gambling may be related to compulsive

gambling. Lesieur (1977) viewed pathological gamblers as being caught in a spiral of escalating commitment to gambling.

The survey results support this proposition in identifying an association between a commitment to the gambling institution and problem gambling behavior. The in-depth interviews showed that many regulars had gambling problems that were manifested in addictive behaviors such as losing more than they could afford, and a deterioration in their friendships, job performance, and family life.

According to the proposed model, stigmatized gamblers can become problem gamblers as a result of their efforts to reduce conflicts with the outside society by coming to the safe sanctuary of a casino. Although the relationship between stigmatization and conflicts with outside society was not measured in this study, strong support for this idea was provided in an ethnographic study conducted by Desmond and analyzed by Lesieur & Custer (1984):

> Despite heavy and sometimes reckless gambling, Desmond (1952) found few negative consequences of the activity.... Family property, if wagered, was done so with consent and frequently the urgings of the spouse. This is quite probably because both heavy winners and heavy losers gained prestige among the Yakima [an American Indian tribe].
>
> With the breakdown of American Indian tribal cultures, along with their continuing positive value on gambling, we would not be surprised to find very high rates of pathological gambling among contemporary native Americans. (p. 149)

Since problem gambling and commitment to a gambling institution are closely related, and commitment is enhanced

either by higher rewards in the gambling institution or higher costs in outside society, both elements (rewards in the gambling institution and costs in outside society) may be associated with problem gambling. Despite the fact that rewards gained in the gambling institution partially lead to problem gambling by influencing the commitment, the rewards themselves are not problems but positive experiences to the gamblers; thus, the costs gamblers face in the outside society appear to be a major influence in their problem gambling.

Academic studies of gambling behavior generally assume that losing at gambling and compulsive gambling are one and the same problem (Hayano, 1982). According to the revised formula, however, losing at gambling is not directly linked with problem gambling because losing does not strengthen a person's commitment to the gambling institution. For example, many recreational players simply quit casino gambling after perceiving that the financial cost of losing is too high. This is an easy conclusion to draw for those having other rewarding activities and social relationships to engage them. It is more difficult to leave for those who depend on the gambling institution for their social and emotional needs and who have many conflicts with the outside society. When committed gamblers are forced to stop gambling, they usually face a variety of unpleasant, if not unbearable, conflicts with the outside society. Almost all the social rewards they experienced in the gambling institution are absent in the

outside society. They have no group affiliation, no emotional or moral support, a lowered self-esteem and social status, and a less salient identity. A casino is a haven where regular gamblers go to escape these negative experiences. The pull of the gambling institution can be so strong that they resort to any means available, including anti-social acts such as theft, embezzlement, robbery, drug dealing, prostitution, and fraud. The costs in outside society and the destructive acts taken to return to action in the gambling institution exacerbate the gambling related problems. All in all, gambling problems are not as embedded in the gambling institution as they are in the outside society. Therefore, as long as committed gamblers stay in the gambling institution, they are relatively problem free. But problems emerge and worsen once they step out the casino door.

A Demographic Profile of Casino Regulars

Zola (1963) considered gambling to be lower-class behavior. Hayano (1982) reported that about half the participants in Gardena cardrooms were Jews. Campbell and Ponting (1984) noted that casino patrons in their study were overrepresented by working class people and minority ethnic groups. Lynch (1990) noted that regular Australian poker-machine players were basically from a working class background. After reviewing the history of legal gambling in Britain, McKibbin (1979) concluded that the skilled working

classes bet most frequently. Consistent with the above studies, this survey revealed that casino participants were overrepresented by working class males, minority ethnic groups, and those with a lower level of education. Casino regulars were more likely than the non-regulars to come from a disadvantaged background. As a result, there is substantial support for the proposed theoretical model. Gamblers from these disadvantaged groups cherish the social rewards available to them in the gambling institution and find the conflicts with outside society overally punitive; thus, they are likely to be committed to the gambling institution and susceptible to becoming problem gamblers.

Females accounted for 16% of all the participants in the casino and there was approximately the same percentage among the regular players. The underrepresentation of females in the casino is probably due to the fact that the casino has traditionally been a male-dominated gambling setting. In addition, females prefer games of pure luck such as bingo and lotteries as opposed to skill games such as Blackjack which is the most popular casino game.

Female recreational players evolved into casino regulars for similar reasons as did their male counterparts, that is, to fulfill their social needs and to escape from outside society. Many female regulars obtained their gambling money from welfare and retirement pensions; a few had their own family businesses. Female regulars bet and played much the

same way as male regulars. Gender is not an important consideration among regular players, the most important characteristic is adhering to the subcultural norms.

Chapter Nine

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings generated through the triangulation of survey data, participant observation and in-depth interviews form the basis for the following conclusions. It is important to reiterate that the ideas for the theoretical model and its supporting evidence were obtained in an urban Alberta casino, which means that the conclusions pertain to gambling behavior in that specific environment.

Conclusions

A theoretical model of gambling behavior examining the relationships between casino gamblers, the casino itself, and the outside society was proposed earlier in the study. This model was based on participant observation in the casino, a review of related literature, and interviews with regular casino players. The intention was to explore the structural and cultural factors operating both in society at large and in a gambling institution and connect them with the personal characteristics of avid regular gamblers. A triangulation of research methods was employed to generate empirical data to test the model and hypotheses derived from it. The theoretical model is largely supported by the results of this multi-methods study. The main conclusions are that social rewards available in the casino, enhanced by its unique institutional

arrangement, are the main lure drawing and holding regular casino gamblers; and that casino gamblers' conflicts with the outside society, magnified by a stigmatization of the gambler's role, are major forces contributing to keeping casino regulars in the gambling institution. There is a "double reinforcement" process at work which secures the commitment of casino regulars to the gambling institution; social rewards reinforce positively while conflicts with the outside society reinforce negatively.

There are two distinct spheres of existence for regular urban casino gamblers. One is the inside world--the casino--which is comforting and socially rewarding; the other is the perpetual whirl of conflict and crises they face in the inhospitable outside world. These disparate worlds work in concert, drawing individuals into gambling venues and, ultimately, trapping them there.

The pertinent findings of this study are summarized as follows:

1. A casino provides more than gambling activity; it provides its participants with a variety of activities and services, social interaction, and is a world of its own.

2. Group affiliation, emotional and moral support, self-esteem, and social status are social rewards obtainable by playing regularly in a casino.

3. Social rewards, more so than monetary rewards, are the prevailing inducements that draw and later attach regular

gamblers to gambling institutions.

4. Regular involvement in casino gambling usually has a detrimental effect on the participant's social networks, marriage, opportunity for, and type of employment, and educational opportunities.

5. Casino regulars have, by and large, more favorable attitudes toward the casino and gambling than do the non-regulars; and they are also less satisfied with their jobs and outside life than are the non-regulars.

6. A commitment to gambling is the result of rewards in the gambling institution minus costs in the gambling institution times costs in the outside society minus rewards in the outside society. Social rewards received in the casino are positive reinforcers and conflicts with the outside society are negative reinforcers, both of which contribute to the high degree of commitment.

7. The ultimate impact of gambling may be negative for casino regulars if one considers their standing in the outside society. But in the gambler's eyes, it is viewed as a worthwhile trade-off; that is, the rewards must exceed the costs in the gambling institution for them to want so desperately to stay in action.

8. A commitment to the gambling institution is associated with problem gambling behavior. The problems are addiction, losing more than one can afford, deteriorating friendships, job performance, and family life.

9. Casino participants are overrepresented by males, the elderly, visible minorities, those with lower incomes, poorly educated, unemployed, partially employed, and working class individuals. Regulars are even more likely to come from these disadvantaged backgrounds.

10. Individuals of the disadvantaged groups are more likely to seek the social rewards offered in the casino and have conflicts with the outside society. This results in a strong commitment to the gambling institution and an increased likelihood of developing a gambling pathology.

Implications

1. One implication of this study for policy makers is that the well-being of gamblers, especially the casino regulars, should be a major concern when making gambling-related policies and gambling regulations. As evidenced in this study, the impact of participating in gambling for these casino regulars can be disastrous once they cannot afford to come to their "social heaven," or when they keep playing to the point of personal and financial ruin. Although they are a minority in the general population, they represent a significant portion of the casino population. With the expansion of casinos nation-wide, the number of problem gamblers will certainly rise. These casino regulars are basically disadvantaged, powerless, and discontented citizens in our society. Their oppression is deeply-rooted in the

social system, so that any solutions must come from making our society a more egalitarian place where everyone has the chance to satisfy his or her social needs. Unfortunately, this Utopian society is not achievable, at least not in the near future. What policy makers might do is to make gambling regulations more favorable to gamblers such as offering fairer odds and reducing the betting limits in casinos. In spite of the fact that these are only stopgap measures, regular gamblers' financial resources would at least not be drained so quickly.

Casinos should not be built near residential areas, especially in the inner city where disadvantaged individuals are more likely to congregate. Easy access to a casino encourages individuals to visit regularly and form a subculture of regular gamblers.

2. A few provinces (Saskatchewan, Alberta, Nova Scotia, and Manitoba) have already established government sponsored programs to prevent gambling addiction and treat problem gamblers. It is a monumental task to prevent problem gambling since governments have vested interests in promoting gambling. However, a couple of measures could be taken. The first step is to educate gamblers by teaching them optimal playing and betting strategies and showing them the consequences of their erroneous gambling perceptions. The long range measure for preventing problem gambling is to bring regular gamblers back into mainstream society. This means convincing them to

discontinue gambling altogether or converting them into social or recreational gamblers. This can be done through a holistic process of learning relevant life skills, developing alternative rewarding activities and hobbies (Walters, 1994b), enlisting the support of family and friends, and re-establishing communal ties. The effectiveness of developing a reinforcing non-gambling lifestyle in cutting down gambling involvement is supported by Downes et al. (1976) study in which they found that involvement in a hobby was significantly related to a low level of involvement in gambling.

In addition, awareness and prevention programs regarding gambling and its negative consequences should be implemented for all citizens.

3. For those groups and organizations treating problem gamblers such as Gamblers Anonymous and community based self-help groups, the implication is contained in the aphorism: "If you can't beat'em, join'em."

A major problem for Gamblers Anonymous is retaining members. The dropout rate is extremely high. The Edmonton chapter estimated that their dropout rate was close to 95% (Smith, 1992). The reasons for discontinuance are numerous, but a basic assumption might be that the environment of Gamblers Anonymous meetings is not as rewarding as that of the gambling institution. Therefore, to attract and retain members, Gamblers Anonymous should emulate the institutional arrangements of casino, providing excitement and social

rewards to the members to make it a comparable substitute for the gambling institution.

According to the model advanced in this study, the doctrine of Gamblers Anonymous that there is no graduation and membership is a lifelong process should be modified. One goal of Gamblers Anonymous should be to help members adjust to the outside society and become a functioning members in it, so they do not feel the pressure to escape to a gambling institution for comfort as a way of evading the burdens of the outside society.

4. Many charity groups and non-profit organizations depend on gambling revenues to support their causes. However, no matter how noble the causes are, it is a questionable practice to exploit unfortunate or "sick" people to support so-called worthy causes. It can also be seen as questionable to extract money from lower income gamblers to support the programs of middle and upper class organizations.

5. For regular gamblers it is an unrealistic and harmful belief that a gambling setting is a secure and comfortable "social heaven." It may be comfortable in many respects, but it is far from secure. Losing your last dollar makes you unwelcome there.

Gamblers need to realize that they are attracted to gambling institutions mainly for social needs rather than economic gain. Socializing is more important than gambling. Therefore, they should wager as little as they can and play

as slowly as possible to cut their financial losses. Meanwhile, they should concentrate on social relations and enjoy the unique institutional arrangements in the gambling setting.

Regular gamblers can be empowered to change their situation. Four decades ago disenchanted gamblers in Los Angeles started Gamblers Anonymous, which has spread all over the world and saved many gambling addicts from ruin (Custer & Milt, 1986). Based on the findings of this study, the attraction of a casino lies in its institutional arrangements and potential social rewards rather than monetary rewards alone; today's gamblers can establish a social club of their own in which casino games could be offered, but only phoney money would change hands.[1] In so doing, they could meet their social needs as effectively as in the real casino, without jeopardizing their financial status.

Recommendations

1. The present study and the theoretical framework have been developed in a single case design using the venue of an urban casino. To adapt the theoretical model to other gambling environments, studies should be conducted on other forms of

[1] Phoney money casinos are popular at the parties of some companies and organizations in Edmonton. The organizers rent the game tables and dealers from a casino company. The person who wins the most gets a small prize as a token of recognizing his or her success.

socially stigmatized gambling or other forms of gambling that occur in a group setting. As Yin (1984) suggested, these additional cases can play a role similar to that in cross-experimental designs, with the theoretical framework being the vehicle for generalization. These cases would either predict similar results (a literal replication) or produce contrary results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical replication). If the results of all the cases turn out as predicted, in the aggregate they would provide compelling support for the initial set of propositions. If the cases are in some way contradictory, the initial propositions can be revised and retested with other cases.

2. The scales used to measure social rewards in the gambling institution and conflicts with outside society could be more precise. More accurate measures of group affiliation, self-esteem, social status, salient identity, loss of outside social networks, disculturation, and value conflicts should be devised and used in future studies testing the theoretical model. The precision of these distinct scales may reveal which social reward or conflict respondents perceive to be most important. Since salient identity is a critical variable in determining the extent of commitment to the gambling institution, it is worthy of a separate study.

3. With respect to respondents' attitudes toward the casino, gambling in general, life satisfaction and job satisfaction, comparisons were made only between frequent and

infrequent gamblers in the present study. If gamblers are compared with non-gamblers on these variables, a better understanding of why people gamble and what impact gambling has on their lives may be gained. It is presumed that non-gamblers are different from regular gamblers in many facets of their lives.

4. An advantage of triangulation is that "any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be much more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information, following a corroboratory mode" (Yin, 1984, p. 91). The most important benefit in using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry. However, due to the limitations of resources and time in this study, the multimethod approach was not utilized as a way of converging the lines of inquiry. Rather, I used the triangulation principally for a supplementary purpose; that is, I employed each method to collect data that would be unattainable by using other research approaches. Therefore, further studies should strive to collect a complete set of data on the model using each research method, to ascertain whether the results acquired through different methods converge.

5. Fieldwork employs subjective means to study subjective phenomena. To get closest to understanding the human actor in the human world, subjectivity, involvement, and commitment should be employed (Adler & Adler, 1988). As a participant

observer, I assumed only a peripheral role in the present study. As a result, I was not always able to supplement the data with my subjective insights. I urge other interested researchers to take a complete membership role if it is financially feasible. The advantages of the complete membership role are that it enables a researcher to gain the player's perspective on a scene. It allows the opportunity to acquire "understanding in use" rather than "reconstituted understanding" (Adler & Adler, 1988), that is, individuals taking complete membership roles can share and grasp the meaning of the members' world as members themselves feel it, as opposed to hearing members recollect and interpret their experiences.

6. Gambling studies have only recently received serious attention from North American academics. Gambling is a productive field for social scientists to pursue various types of research. For example, gambling studies can enhance our sociological understanding of concepts such as identity salience, group affiliation, social status, stigma, disculturation, total institution, risk taking, interaction processes, and socialization. Theories of subculture, non-conformist behavior, play, leisure, and recreation can also be tested in gambling settings (Frey, 1984). Frey expressed this point succinctly: "The fact that just about every member of a society has participated or continues to participate in gambling of one form or another should tell social scientists

that gambling is serious behavior worthy of their systematic and scientific attention" (1984, p. 121).

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APPENDIX A

A SURVEY OF THE CASINO PARTICIPATION

This questionnaire is intended to understand various aspects of your participation in this casino. Your answers will provide us with helpful information, your thoughtful responses will be much appreciated. It should take about eight minutes to complete the questionnaire.

The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. There are no numbers or marks on this questionnaire that will identify you. PLEASE DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM. Although it is hoped that all questions could be completed, you are not obliged to answer any questions that you feel are offensive. It is important that you answer the questions as honestly and accurately as possible.

* *

1. How often have you played in this casino in the last 3 months?

Only once	( );	2 days a week	( );	5 days a week	( )
Once a month	( );	3 days a week	( );	Everyday	( )
Once a week	( );	4 days a week	( );	Never played	( )

2. For how many years have you been attending this casino?

_____ year(s)

3. What is your average bet in the casino?

$1-4 ( );	$10-14 ( );	$20-29 ( );	$40-49 ( )
$5-9 ( );	$15-19 ( );	$30-39 ( );	50 or more ( )

4. What would you say about your win-loss in this casino since last week?

Way ahead	( );	Somewhat ahead	( );	About even	( )
Way behind	( );	Somewhat behind	( )		

5. What is the largest amount of money you have ever gambled with on any one day?

$1 or less	( );	$11-100	( );	$1001-10,000	( )
$2-10	( );	$101-1000	( );	More than $10,000	( )

6. Besides attending the casino, please indicate which of the following games you play on a regular basis:

Bingo ( ); Card games ( ); Horse race ( ); Sport select ( )
Lottery ( ); Raffle ticket ( ); Video gambling machines ( )

7. How would you rate this casino on these scales?

CASINO

Pleasant	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Unpleasant
Hostile	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Friendly
Unimportant	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Important
Sweet	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Bitter
Comfortable	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Uncomfortable
Secure	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Insecure

8. How would you rate gambling on the following scales?

GAMBLING

Immoral	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Moral
Good	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Bad
Virtuous	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Sinful
Ethical	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Unethical
Shameful	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Proud
Ugly	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Beautiful

9. How would you rate your life outside of the casino?

LIFE

Exciting	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Dull
Unhappy	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Happy
Sociable	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Lonely
Cheerful	___:___:___:___:___:___:___	Sad

10. Please complete the following sentences:

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT THIS CASINO IS _____

_____

_____

WHAT I DISLIKE ABOUT THIS CASINO IS _____

_____

_____

***** Now we would like to find out a little more about you. *****

11. Which age group do you belong to?

18-23 years old ( ); 30-39 years old ( ); 50-59 years old ( )
24-29 years old ( ); 40-49 years old ( ); 60 or over ( )

12. What is your sex? Male ( ); Female ( )

13. Were you born in Canada? Yes ( ); No ( )

If NO, in which country were you born? _____

14. How would you describe your ethnic identity? (Examples of ethnic groups would be: Ukrainian, German, Chinese, and so on)

_____

15. What is your current marital status:

Married ( ); Widowed ( ); Divorced ( ); Separated ( )
Living with a partner ( ); Never married ( )

16. What language did you first learn as a child?

Language _____

17. What is the total income of all the members of your household for this past year before taxes and deductions? (Please indicate the corresponding letter): _____

Under $6000	H	$20000-25999 ...	M
$6000-7999	I	$26000-35999 ...	N
$8000-9999	J	$36000-49999 ...	O
$10000-13999 ...	K	$50000-79999 ...	P
$14000-19999 ...	L	$80000+	Q

What is your own total individual income for this past year before taxes and deductions? Letter _____

18. How many members are there in your household? _____ person(s).

19. What is your highest level of education?

NO SCHOOLING	( )	
ELEMENTARY	incomplete ( );	complete ( )
JUNIOR HIGH	incomplete ( );	complete ( )
HIGH SCHOOL	incomplete ( );	complete ( )
NON-UNIVERSITY (voc/tech, nursing schools)	incomplete ( );	complete ( )
UNIVERSITY	incomplete ( );	complete ( )

20. Please indicate if you are currently:

Employed full-time	( );	Retired	( )
Employed part-time	( );	Disabled	( )
Unemployed	( );	In school	( )
Keeping house	( );	Other (Specify)	_____

21. What kind of work (do/did) you normally do? That is, what (is/was) your job title?

OCCUPATION _____

What (does/did) that job involve? (Describe)

_____

22. On the whole, how satisfied are you with the work you do?

Very satisfied	( );	A little dissatisfied	( )
Satisfied	( );	Dissatisfied	( )
A little satisfied	( );	Very dissatisfied	( )

23. What other leisure activities do you engage in regularly? (Please check off all that apply)

TV viewing ( );	Going to movies ( );
Joining a health club ( );	Playing sports ( );
Travelling ( );	Window shopping ( );
Gardening ( );	Visiting parks ( );
Reading ( );	Having a hobby ( );
Belonging to a social club ( );	Going to church ( );

Others (Specify): _____

24. What would you say about your gambling experience:

* Did you ever lose time from work due to gambling? Yes ( ); No ( )
* Has gambling ever made your home life unhappy? Yes ( ); No ( )
* Did gambling affect your reputation? Yes ( ); No ( )
* Have you ever felt remorse after gambling? Yes ( ); No ( )
* Did you often gamble until your last dollar was gone? Yes ( ); No ( )
* Did you ever borrow to finance your gambling? Yes ( ); No ( )
* Have you ever sold anything to finance gambling? Yes ( ); No ( )
* Did you ever gamble longer than you had planned? Yes ( ); No ( )
* Have you ever gambled to escape worry or trouble? Yes ( ); No ( )
* Did gambling cause you to have difficulty in sleeping? Yes ( ); No ( )

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR REGULAR CASINO PARTICIPANTS

1. What has the player done in the casino?
   - activities
   - interactions with others

2. What are the player's gambling behaviors?
   - playing style and betting habit
   - how much money lost
   - knowledge about casino, games and odds
   - problem gambling

   * Questions related to problem gambling:
     - preoccupation with gambling
     - larger amounts of money wagered than intended
     - need to increase the size of bets
     - restlessness if unable to gamble
     - repeated efforts to cut down or stop gambling
     - failing to fulfil social, educational or occupational obligations because of gambling
     - giving up social, occupational or recreational activity in order to gamble
     - financial, social, occupational, or legal problems caused by gambling

3. How does the player feel about gambling, the gambling institution and the outside world?
   - reasons for gambling in casino
   - opinions on casino gambling and loss
   - opinions on charitable causes and organizations
   - opinions on outside society and related issues
   - feelings about existence in casino
   - feelings about other players and casino staff
   - treatment by individuals or groups in outside society

4. Background and demographic information about the player.
   - age, ethnicity, marital status, language, education, employment status, social status, immigration status etc.
   - financial situation (income)
   - effect of loss on financial situation
   - relation with family members and friends
   - interference of gambling with job, education and social life
   - access to other social or rec activities
   - involvements in other social groups
   - drinking, smoking, drug use, and similar habits

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I am conducting a research project, titled "A Study of Gamblers and their World," for my dissertation in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of doctor of philosophy at the University of Alberta. The purpose of the study is to understand gambling behavior of the regular players in casino. I would like to interview you about your experience in the casino and some related information. I will interview you in several sessions. Each session will last about twenty minutes. The total amount of interview time will be approximately two hours.

Your answers will be seen only by myself and my thesis advisors. They will not know your name because I am going to use a code name rather than your real name. I will keep the notes of your answers in a safe place, inaccessible to anyone else, and I will destroy them after the study is completed. Also, it will not be possible to trace your identity from our published reports.

You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable. And you may withdraw from the interview AT ANY TIME without any consequences. If you would like to know more about the study and have questions, please feel free to ask or call me, Grant Ocean, 434-3244; or call my advisor Dr. Garry Smith, 492-5603.

I HAVE READ THE INFORMATION ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEING ASKED OF ME. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT I MAY WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY AT ANY TIME, WITHOUT PREJUDICE. I FREELY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

_____ _____

Signature of Researcher Date

LETTER OF SPONSORSHIP

This is to acknowledge that after having read his research proposal, Casino ABS management has agreed to allow Dahai Xu, a Ph.D. student at the University of Alberta and also one of our dealers, to conduct a research project aimed at understanding the gambling behavior of casino attendants in one of our locations in Edmonton -- Casino ABS Argyll. The management has also agreed to assist the researcher in distributing and collecting questionnaires in the aforementioned location.

November 25, 1992

Barry S. Pritchard
General Manager
of Casino ABS

10549 - 102 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
Ph: 424-WINS (9467)

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

Conducted during April 1993

Casino ABS--7055 Argyll Rd, Edmonton

Date/Day/Time	Male	Female	Minority	Age(60up)	Regular	Total
3/Sat./17:20	122	24	68	51	53	146
5/Mon./23:30	103	20	61	41	57	123
6/Tue./12:00	21	4	10	9	19	25
7/Wed./18:25	97	20	57	39	59	117
8/Thur/14:50	69	14	41	31	45	83
9/Fri./13:45	67	12	38	27	43	79
10/Sat/20:35	128	23	75	43	61	151
12/Mon/12:00	19	4	8	10	17	23
13/Tue/14:55	82	13	42	32	51	95
14/Wed/18:30	88	16	59	36	53	104
15/Thu/22:15	106	23	62	45	55	129
16/Fri/16:30	114	21	49	23	57	135
17/Sat/12:40	62	11	34	26	39	73
21/Wed/15:35	91	18	65	38	52	109
22/Thu/19:20	107	21	56	47	58	128
23/Fri/13:10	85	18	51	36	56	103
24/Sat/20:45	128	25	76	48	66	153
26/Mon/17:25	115	21	63	24	62	136
27/Tue/22:55	119	22	87	41	65	141
28/Wed/13:15	77	14	33	31	48	91
29/Thu/16:30	92	20	52	38	54	112
30/Fri/23:40	121	23	74	42	63	144
Total 22	2013	387	1161	758	1133	2400
Percent	84%	16%	48%	32%	47%	

APPENDIX D

ORIGINAL DATA OF THE SURVEY

(Conducted during April - May, 1993)

ID NO	1 FREQ	2 LEN	3 AVER	4 WIN	5 LAR	6 FOR M	7 EMOT	8 ATI	9 LIF E	11 AGE	2 SEX	3 IMM I	4 EMT H	5 MAR I	6 LAN G	7 INC O	8 MEB	9 EDU C	20 EMP L	1 SOC I	2 JOB	3 LEI S	24 PRO B
001	5	4	4	4	4	2	34	36	12	4	1	1	9	1	1	6	5	4	1	6	3	4	3
002	5	7	5	5	4	2	24	31	6	3	1	1	9	3	1	4	1	3	2	7	2	1	5
003	4	3	2	3	3	4	31	35	19	3	2	1	9	4	1	4	3	4	2	6	3	2	1
004	1	2	1	3	3	0	14	11	25	5	1	1	9	1	1	8	5	5	1	2	6	7	0
005	5	5	4	4	4	2	14	34	8	6	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	3	5	6	3	2	2
006	6	4	2	4	3	1	42	36	9	5	1	2	2	1	1	5	4	3	2	4	2	1	4
007	4	3	5	3	2	3	25	26	23	4	2	1	9	1	1	8	5	5	1	3	4	5	0
008	3	2	6	4	4	5	12	17	24	5	2	1	9	1	1	9	4	6	1	2	5	8	0
009	3	1	3	5	5	6	11	18	28	4	1	2	4	1	2	6	6	4	1	3	5	4	1
010	2	4	4	1	2	7	8	12	21	3	1	2	1	1	2	8	5	5	1	2	6	12	0
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```
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117   6 12  5 4 3 0   31 41 12 4 1   1 9   1 1 7   3 5 1   3 4   2   2
```

```
VARIABLE LABELS:
  IDNO 'Identification number'
   1 FREQ 'Frequency of play'
   2 LENG 'Length of play'
   3 AVER 'Average wager'
   4 WIN  'Win-loss'
   5 LARG 'Largest bet'
   6 FORM 'Other forms of gambling'
   7 EMOT 'Emotional support or attitude to casino'
   8 ATTI 'Attitude to gambling or moral support'
   9 LIFE 'Life satisfaction'
  11 AGE  'Age'
  12 SEX  'Sex'
  13 IMMI 'Immigration status'
  14 ETHN 'Ethnicity'
  15 MARI 'Marital status'
  16 LANG 'Language learned as child'
  17 INCO 'Income'
  18 MEMB 'Members of household'
  19 EDUC 'Education level'
  20 EMPL 'Employment status'
  21 SOCI 'Social status'
  22 JOB  'Job satisfaction'
  23 LEIS 'Leisure activities'
  24 PROB 'Problem gambling'
```

RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Collected during April - May '93 (Edmonton)
Analyzed during November - December '93 (North Battleford)

Descriptive Statistics and Univariate Analysis

Frequency of the Demographic Variables **Total cases = 117**

AGE

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
18-23 years old	1	9	7%
24-29 years old	2	18	15%
30-39 years old	3	23	20%
40-49 years old	4	24	21%
50-59 years old	5	20	17%
60 or over	6	23	20%
	Total	117	100%

SEX

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
Male	1	92	79%
Female	2	25	21%
	Total	117	100%

IMMIGRATION STATUS

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
Born in Canada	1	66	56%
Immigrated	2	51	44%
	Total	117	100%

LANGUAGE LEARNED AS CHILD

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
English	1	73	62%
Other	2	44	38%
	Total	117	100%

ETHNICITY

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
Asian	1	18	15%
Black	2	1	1%
Italy	3	14	12%
East Indian	4	7	6%
Arabian	5	3	3%
Native	6	2	2%
East European	7	10	8%
Jew	8	3	3%
Canadian	9	50	42%
European	10	9	8%
	Total	117	100%

MARITAL STATUS

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
Married	1	61	52%
Widowed	2	13	11%
Divorced	3	11	9%
Separated	4	10	9%
Living with a partner	5	6	5%
Never married	6	16	14%
	Total	117	100%

INCOME

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
Under $6000	1	2	2%
$6000-7999	2	0	0%
$8000-9999	3	7	6%
$10000-13999	4	13	11%
$14000-19999	5	22	19%
$20000-25999	6	23	20%
$26000-35999	7	26	22%
$36000-49999	8	17	14%
$50000-79999	9	6	5%
$80000 +	10	1	1%
	Total	117	100%

EDUCATION LEVEL

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
No school	1	2	2%
Elementary	2	15	13%
Junior high	3	35	30%
High school	4	42	35%
Voc/tech schools	5	16	14%
University	6	7	6%
	Total	117	100%

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
Employed full-time	1	55	47%
Employed part-time	2	23	20%
Unemployed	3	16	14%
Keeping house	4	4	3%
Retired	5	17	14%
Disabled	6	0	0%
In school	7	2	2%
	Total	117	100%

SOCIAL STATUS

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
Upper class	1	3	3%
Lower upper	2	14	12%
Upper middle	3	19	16%
Middle class	4	24	20%
Lower middle	5	22	19%
upper lower	6	19	16%
Lower class	7	16	14%
	Total	117	100%

WIN-LOSS

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
Way ahead	1	4	3%
Somewhat ahead	2	10	9%
About even	3	30	26%
Somewhat behind	4	46	39%
Way behind	5	27	23%
	Total	117	100%

LARGEST BET

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
$1 or less	1	4	3%
$2-10	2	19	16%
$11-100	3	66	57%
$101-1000	4	25	21%
$1001-10000	5	3	3%
$More than $10000	6	0	0%
	Total	117	100%

OTHER FORMS OF GAMBLING

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Percent by cases
Bingo	1	35	12%	30%
Card games	2	19	6%	16%
Horse race	3	38	13%	32%
Sport select	4	62	20%	53%
Lottery	5	96	31%	82%
Raffle ticket	6	16	5%	14%
Video gambling machines	7	41	13%	35%
	Total	307	100%	

MEMBERS OF HOUSEHOLD

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent
1	1	41	35%
2	2	24	20%
3	3	17	14%
4	4	20	17%
5+	5	15	14%
	Total	117	100%